

# Early Music

## REVIEW

Number 140

February 2011

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £2.50

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Early Music Review is published in  
alternate months  
The International Diary is published every  
month except January

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This must be our first issue without a music-review section. A few are squeezed in on pp 5 & 19. But there has been a shortage of editions to write about. Editors among our readership, please make sure that you ask your publisher to send copies to us – similarly, those who are members of committees of organisations that publish music.

Two recordings of renaissance church music came my way in December, and I was lying in bed trying to work out how to write about them. In many ways they were good. But it is disappointing that a new ensemble like *The Marian Consort* isn't experimenting with new performance ideas. For good or ill, outstanding new early instrumental groups need to be more than good players. They may play too fast and too slow, or bend the tempo or exaggerate phrases, but they are finding another way to understand how the music works. The *Kammerchor Josquin des Prés* is over 20 years old, so has more excuse to sound a little conventional – am I right in finding it somewhat Anglican? (I haven't enough experience of German church choirs to know if they are relying on a local equivalent tradition). Both recordings are, in their way, beautifully sung, but neither sound to me particularly 16<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Next morning, I overheard while shaving a *Today* spot on how good English choirs were, chiefly because of the Anglican tradition (really? not because of our choral societies?), then read over my plate of cereal a recent interview-article on John Butt in *Classical Music/Early Music Today* (4 Dec. 2010, p. 12-13) by Graham Lock. I'll quote part of a paragraph in John's words, expressing with greater authority and going beyond what I've been thinking over the last few years.

Too often, performers are not *hearing* but reproducing, just reading the notes!... I'm constantly fighting against what you might call the Anglican tradition, people who read exceptionally quickly and sing absolutely beautifully, but they're used to this very purist English approach. I'm always trying to suggest that they might let the odd hair down. One of my interests in large-scale performances is to let people be more daring, almost anarchic, and then try to organise the anarchy. My view is that if they sing with a sense of abandon, as long as they do it with absolute conviction, it will sound good.'

The choral-scholar education actually gives singers a marvellous springboard: Christopher Page deduced in *Early Music* some years ago that it was as near as we could get to the experience of medieval singers. But it is difficult to break away from the sound (and the attachment to soaring trebles). It might be interesting if some cathedrals tried their local accents! CB

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

## BYRD'S WORLD

John Harley *The World of William Byrd: Musicians, Merchants and Magnates* Ashgate, 2010. xvii + 306pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 1 4094 088 2

The first thing that struck me was the 1572 map of London, with an alphabetic index to places mentioned in the book and numbers to locate them clearly on it. I was pleased to see that Joseph Kerman gave it similar prominence by closing his TLS review with a commendation of it. This isn't an obvious first book to read about Byrd. Harley's *William Byrd: Gentleman of the Chapel Royal* (Ashgate, 1997 rev 1999) is the best place to start if you want a biography, for which this book provides a few updates. It is essentially a series of independent studies, mostly devoted to individuals who were musicians, relatives or other people who feature in Byrd's life. It is a book that is easily dipped into, and is perhaps best read thus. There are lots of links between the people mentioned, not all musical, since members of Byrd's family were in business. An example of how people were connected can be illustrated by p. 40, in the chapter on John Heywood. In the 1520s, he was a singer and virginalist at court. He married a niece of Sir Thomas More, Joan Rastall, who was the widow of Richard Pynson, who was the son of the King's Printer. One of Heywood's sisters was the mother of John Donne, poet and Dean of St Paul's. A reference to page 140 (cross-references within the book are shown very neatly by a page number in brackets in a smaller font) shows that Byrd's son Christopher also married a More, linking two families with catholic connections. The intertwining of family and social relationships reminds us that London was a much smaller city than now, and but one wonders whether the frequent appearance of catholics is because catholics naturally associated with fellow believers (many chains like the one quoted lead include catholic families) or because there were actually rather a lot of them. Harley suggests that Byrd might have known the catholic martyr Edmund Campion as a boy (p. 9-10): his *Deus venerunt gentes* and, better-known, *Why do I use my paper, pen and ink* were commemorations of Campion. The first chapter, on the Byrd family and St Paul's Cathedral, and a later one 'Byrd as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal' interested me. I wondered a couple of issues ago when the organ begin to play with rather than in alternation with the choir. Judging by his wage, the organist was important. Perhaps John Harley might make that his next topic.

Clive Walkley *Juan Esquivel: A Master of Sacred Music during the Spanish Golden Age* Boydell Press, 2010 272pp, £55.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 587 5

Review in the next issue

## MUSIC IN LATIN-AMERICAN TOWNS

*Music and Urban Society in Colonial Latin America* Edited by Geoffrey Baker and Tess Knighton Cambridge University Press, 2011. xix + 371 pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 0 521 76686 9

I was intrigued that a news story a few days ago required the script to mention 'towns and cities' as if there was a significant difference between them other than having a cathedral or royal charter. Strangely, I've never considered whether there was a similar formal distinction in other countries: one really needs a back-formation from urban to the Latin *urbs* so that books like this can use a neutral term: urban does not carry with it any baggage of Latin town status. I wonder whether there is very much to be said about non-urban music in this vast geographical area (vast enough to reach the Philippines, as David Irving shows). Surely any non-urban music is virtually lost, except by back-projections of modern rural styles. Virtually all professional music depended on urban sources of wealth. So while the field of urban studies is valid in other disciplines, it's virtually irrelevant to musicologists except to use their research to give the music they find some context.<sup>1</sup>

I'm not too concerned about the theoretical background. There is a vast amount of fascinating information here, much of it associated with the church, which was far more receptive to local cultures than most protestant invaders in Africa seem to have been. Most readers will have heard recordings of villancicos associated with major church feasts; I'm interested that their apparent inclusiveness is 'not reflective of a multicultural urban context; rather, they illustrate an adhesion to elite linguistic norms, whether directly or through mocking the alternatives.' The awareness of racial and social groups seems to have been complex; the chapter by David Coifman on the *Fiesta de la Naval* in Caracas is intriguing – as is the nature of the feast itself, celebrating the remote Battle of Lepanto in 1571, which I associate with music in Venice.

What is frustrating is the considerable detail about a variety of musical events, but the absence of music to bring it to life. Various conductors have been mining isolated nuggets from the repertoire, without really knowing how typical they are and relating them to any context. Have they been carefully sifting their finds and

1. Is the metaphor dead enough to use that word in this context?

2. The urban nature of most music applies equally well to Europe. Even isolated palaces like Esterházy were outposts of urban culture, though supported by a rural economy.

selecting the best, or is it more or less a random sample? If I lived in one of the South American cities I would want to tie up place, function and music. As it is, I feel the frustration that I did when reading Woodfill's *Music in English Society from Elizabeth to Charles I* in the 1950s before I knew much of the music. So read this with interest, listen to the music, sing it, if you can find any,<sup>3</sup> and wait for scholars and performers to harness the imaginative knowledge that has been applied to creating programmes of Venetian music.

#### W. F. BACH

David Schulenberg *The Music of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (Eastman Studies in Music, 79)*. University of Rochester Press, 2010. xii + 341pp, £50.00. ISBN 978 1 58046 359 1 [in UK from Boydell & Brewer]

Twice I have written a somewhat critical review of a book and encountered the author in person soon after the issue of *EMR* appeared. In one case, I happened to sit next to her at breakfast at a conference, in the other, I found myself chairing a discussion on Byrd's keyboard music at the Boston Festival and David Schulenberg was one of the panel. I don't think there were any hard feelings, since he subsequently subscribed to *EMR* and I met him and his wife at the first NEMA Conference in York in 1999. I need not, however, have any trepidation about his reaction to my review of this excellent book, which offers a thorough biography and a fair account of WFB's music.

The first chapter functions as a general introduction/life-and-works survey: I recommend this strongly to all potential performers of and listeners to WFB's music, even those who are not the sort who would be comfortable reading right through the detailed medium-by-medium chapters that follow. The concluding 'notes on performance' are stimulating too. The 'violone' is a particular problem (isn't it always?) with a bottom note of bottom B flat in some pieces, so may sometimes be a bass violin.

WFB was less well-known than his brothers CPE and JC. The second chapter is entitled 'Sebastian's son, Emanuel's brother', and it is difficult to understand WF without continually relating his music to his father, either because of influence or contrast; CPE's independence is more assured (though both WF and CPE reused their father's music). Further chapters are devoted to the keyboard music, instrumental ensemble works, and vocal works.

WF's output was small compared with JS and CPE: very little has emerged that is not in the catalogue by Falck published in 1913<sup>4</sup>. I've been playing as background while

writing this the first of the Carus CDs of WFB's cantatas, and fascinating it is (see review on p. 29). Wollny's notes to the CD and Schulenberg's wider survey complement each other well, and there will be editions to follow: Carus are producing the Collected Works as well.

A tantalising feature of Schulenberg's book is the quantity of music examples, in a sensible compact size – why do so many music books have grotesquely large examples? His musical points are well made. He raises a variety of general points in passing, often comparing styles and techniques with those of JS (though not to denigrate WF). WF seems to have found the change from baroque to galant more of a problem than his brothers (though the first track on the CD mentioned above uses stylistic variation to excellent effect). CPE and JC handled the problem in very different ways, but both with less relationship to the past than WF. Listening to the cantatas certainly impressed me. I suspect that the impetus given to WFB by last-year's anniversary (he was born in 1710) will lead to editions, performances and recordings, and Schulenberg's book will be the first point of information for anglophone readers.

#### D'INDY'S COMPOSITION TEACHING

Vincent d'Indy *Course in Musical Composition vol. 1*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. xviii + 379pp, \$50.00. ISBN 978 0 8061 4134 3

D'Indy was a significant figure in French music education a century ago, and a translation by Gail Hilson Woldu fills about two thirds of this book. This covers mostly medieval and renaissance music, along with a lot of general comments, which can be stimulating. 'There is no melody that begins on a heavy beat' might seem questionable. To check, I glanced through *The Shorter New Oxford Book of Carols* as a sample volume covering a wide chronological span; many items begin with an up-beat, and most of those that do begin with a down-beat have the main stress of the phrase later, often not till the second line:

*Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King.*

D'Indy's comments are helpful as far as they go, but need more emphasis on the hierarchy of accents in a phrase. His most thorough description is of Josquin's popular *Ave Maria*, but he confuses the shape of the opening phrase by marking *gratia plena* as a separate subsection without making clear that the climax of the four words is either the first note of *gratia* or, more likely, *plena*, which leads the listener on to the end of the musical and verbal phrase. He prints the text as verse (presumably singers were literate enough then to see that verses 1 and 7 were outside the

3. The book has one meagre music example for two trebles and instrumental bass: the voices sing in thirds, but are strangely notated with the upper part on the second stave.

4. So it seems sensible to keep the familiar numbers. I wonder whether, as with Helm's CPE catalogue, the new numbers won't oust the old.

Falck's list has the advantage of being compact on 31 easily-photocopyable pages, giving enough of the opening themes for identification of ambiguous titles; his book is downloadable from the www. Extensive information on the sources, but without incipits, is available in Peter Wollny's 1993 thesis.

metrical scheme) and notes that some verses are duple, some triple. But that involves awareness that normal Latin accent rules are not applied to *Ave pia... Sine viro...* etc. (Josquin stresses them French-style on the second syllable). My guess is that d'Indy tried too hard to simplify, as in his attempt to give significance to the idea that the minor chord is the same as the major but with the thirds in a different order. Read this as a historical document, especially as one with a French rather than a Germanic slant; but I was somewhat disappointed.

This is followed by *A Comparative Analysis of Vincent d'Indy's Cours de composition musicale*, by Merle Montgomery (1904-86). She compares d'Indy's ideas with those of other theorists from Morley to Hindemith, from the 1946 PhD thesis, which also included her translation of the *Course...* It is explained why her version wasn't published then (Durand demanded a 25% royalty), but not why it deserves current circulation, and it makes one wonder whether it is an *In memoriam* for her, with a plug by a Robert Johnson, an associate of hers. But if so, its an odd memorial: what was wrong with her own translation?

#### RECERCARE XXI

RECERCARE XXI/1-2 2009 *Journal for the study and practice of early music* directed by Arnaldo Morelli. LIM Editrice [2009]. 306 pp, €24 (€29 outside of Italy) ISSN 1120-5741 ISBN 978 88 7096 598 8 [recercare@libero.it](mailto:recercare@libero.it); [lim@lim.it](mailto:lim@lim.it) – [www.lim.it](http://www.lim.it)

This periodical warrants a description for the benefit of those who have never seen it. Physically it is similar to *Early Music* – glossy paper, with black and white illustrations, plates and musical examples, and a colour reproduction on the cover – but considerably heavier due to its length. Articles vary from 15 to over 60 pages. Nominally a semi-annual publication, it actually appears annually, presenting studies in Italian and English (less often in French, German and Spanish) on Italian music or musical cultural relations from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, often with an interdisciplinary point of view. Potential contributors should see “Notes for contributors” under *Recercare* at [www.fima-online.org](http://www.fima-online.org). This issue, dedicated to Patrizio Barbieri, contains articles by three other members of the international advisory board and one by the editor, Arnaldo Morelli. Three of the nine studies are in English.

Peter Williams' *Is music a discrete mode of experience?* is not, however, specifically about the aesthetics of Italian music. Ideas are cited from the ancient Greeks and medieval authors to Wittgenstein, Whitehead, and contemporaries, giving, among other things, a historical perspective on the problem of defining music, explaining its transfer to experience and its potential significance.

Philippe Canguilhem's *The madrigal en route to Florence (1540-1545)* delves into correspondence of musical interest

received by Giovanbattista della Fonte between 1533 and 1570, the period in which he and his brother Lionardo organized amateur musical gatherings, for which MSS of madrigals, sometimes fair autograph copies, had to be obtained. The useful passages from the letters are included in a section of documents.

Arnaldo Morelli's *Una nuova fonte per la musica di Ghiselin Danckerts "musicò e cantore cappellano della cappella del papa"* refers to, and meticulously describes, a rare, newly discovered undated MS of sacred polyphony in the Santa Cecilia Conservatory (RomaSC 968) from c. 1540-50, copied by and including compositions attributable to Ghiselin Danckerts (c. 1510-after 1565), a conservative Dutch musician and theorist active in the Papal chapel.

Renato Meucci's *Alessandro Piccinini e il suo arciliuto* defends the lutenist's own claim to have been the inventor of the “chitarrone”, by explaining the confusion over the word and showing that Piccinini's was very different from the “proto-chitarrone” which led experts to challenge his claim. The Appendix presents those parts of Chapters 28, 31, and 34 of Piccinini's text (on the origins of the chitarrone and pandora), with a discursive, illuminating commentary on the side.

Paolo Gozza's *La dialettica dello strumento musicale nell'età moderna* has a bewildering title for English readers. By “modern age” academic Italians mean “after 1492”.<sup>5</sup> The “dialectic” under discussion is the changing conception of the cosmos, or the world, or man, seen metaphorically as musical instruments. There are many surprises in examples from Roger North, Athanasius Kircher, Zarlino, Descartes, Diderot and others, from the expected (man as a speaking instrument) to the more surprising (the decadence of music in parallel with the decadence of society). I had no idea that in Diderot's *Nephew of Rameau*, Jean-François, who is presented as a buffoon, is likened to a rancorous, rebellious harpsichord whose discordant harmonics produce aversion.

Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini's *Fabio da Bologna, virtuoso costruttore di cembali* establishes beyond doubt that Raymond Russell and Donald Roach mistakenly invented a harpsichord builder whom they called P[ietro] Faby, by misinterpreting “[of] P[atris] Fabij”, making other errors as well. Born in Bologna in 1639, active only there and in Ravenna (dying in 1703), Fabio was a monk, organist, organ maker, carpenter, marble-sculptor, and eminent maker of very ornate harpsichords. Four are described in detail and illustrated, especially the one dated 1686, now part of the author's personal collection, which has some very special characteristics and “stops”, and which has been restored to its original state by the elimination of the keys and a register added in a prior restoration.

5. Not, alas, too bewildering now that musicologists have adopted the historian's usage of modern beginning around 1500 rather than 1900, as is customary in the arts. CB

Francesco Luisi's *Nuovi accertamenti sui quadri e sui violini di Corelli. Storie di collezionismo al tempo di Clemente XI* focuses on collections of paintings and instruments acquired by the noble Sacripente family – lawyers by training, with high positions in the Church – in Rome in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with details (dates, artists, subject matter) which tend to confirm the hypothesis that they may include Corelli's personal collection.

Giancarlo Rostirolla's *Il "Mondo novo" accresciuto. Trenta nuovi disegni di Pier Leone Ghezzi [1674-1755] dal Museo dell'Ermitage di San Pietroburgo* contains 33 full-page plates of Ghezzi's portrait drawings of composers, musicians, singers, and one of two female figures representing Carnival and Lent. They are caricatures, but not ferocious ones; rather, they sympathetically reveal character, along with wordy, dated captions (transcribed under each drawing) about positions and achievements (e.g. "Signor Pietro Bardi Venetian harpsichord maker, organist, violinist, who made a lute stop for my harpsichord...He [dresses in] this suit and without wig when he is working; otherwise he dresses extremely civilly with wig etc."). The originals, in brown ink, are printed here in black. This study supplements the author's monograph (2001) on 376 other drawings by Ghezzi of musical and theatrical personages of 18<sup>th</sup> century Rome, the "new world" as defined by the artist, less than a tenth of the entire collection.

Huub van der Linden's short article *Pistocchi's gift: Traeri's organ (1719) for San Filippo Neri in Forlì* is in English (though *Recercare* needs an English editor to correct grammatical mistakes and typos). Francesco Antonio Pistocchi (1659-1726), singer, composer, teacher, and possibly a keyboard player, who subsequently became a Jesuit, joined the Forlì Congregation in 1715 and offered to pay for the replacement of the old organ. Work was completed in 1719 by the Brescian, Francesco Traeri. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the church itself was used for concerts, then restored in the 1990s. Today this neglected but not modified organ is deserving of restoration and concert use.

The present issue presents only a list of books received, but no reviews.

Barbara Sachs

#### ORGAN RESTORATION

John R. Watson *Artifacts in Use: The paradox of restoration and the conservation of organs* OHS Press, Richmond (VA). ISBN 978-0-913499-34-X \$34.95

This book, although concentrating on organs, is aimed at the wider audience of those involved in the restoration of all types of functional objects where there exists the potential conflict between restoration and conservation. Its rather academic approach takes in the wider philosophy and psychology of restoration, with some complex and intense arguments – it is full of words like 'paradox' and

'paradigm' that normally send me screaming to the hills. Since 1988 the author has been Conservator of Instruments and Mechanical Arts at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, co-publishers of this book with the Organ Historical Society of America. He uses his own experience on working on six organ restoration projects, including the c.1740/60 Wren Chapel organ, formally at Kimberley Hall, Norfolk. Reference is also made to the well-known c.1630 chamber organ that survived at Norfolk's Hunstanton Hall for more than three centuries before emigrating to the USA where it was quickly rendered completely unplayable by an over-exuberant heating system. It also includes the OHS Guidelines for Conservation, revised in 2008. More information, including colour versions of all the photographs in the book, is to be found at:--

<http://aiu.preservationtheory.org/>.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

#### MUSIC REVIEW: UT ORPHEUS

George Bingham *40 Airs Anglois for Treble Recorder and Continuo* Edited by Nicola Sansone Ut Orpheus Edizioni (FL 11), 2010. vi + 36pp + part, € 24.95.

Schickhardt *6 Sonatas Op. 5 for Treble Recorder, 2 Oboes, Viol and Continuo. Vol. 1: Sonatas I-II*. Edited by Nicola Sansone Ut Orpheus Edizioni (FL 12), 2010. vi + 36pp + 5 parts, €34.95.

The Bingham is the third of four sets of English Airs published in Amsterdam between 1702 and 1706. Although not divided into suites, the items are nevertheless grouped by key. The collection begins with suites in d, F, G, B flat – 16 movements altogether, taking 21 pages of the modern edition, whereas Giorgio Bingham's 24 pieces are in seven smaller groups and take up 15 pages. If you are looking for a concert piece, the first suite (*Ouverture, A Farewell, Air, Adagio, Jigg, A Ground*) is the best bet. The original edition was in two separate parts; Ut Orpheus produces a two-stave score and a recorder part.

The Schickhardt is more unusual with a scoring for 'Une Flute, deux Hautbois, une Viole de Gambae & Basse Continue', to quote the original; title page. The editorial use of Treble Recorder (as quoted from the modern title page in the heading above) is OK, but normally Viola da gamba is abbreviated to gamba, not viol, which might disappoint a treble viol player who had ordered a copy. The Bc partbook was labelled *Organo*, not *Continuo*, which may or may not be significant. The organ part mostly doubles the gamba, but in a few places, as the editor points out, the gamba appears to go below the organ in a harmonically unsatisfactory way (eg page 9, bar 82 and page 13, bar 22: the latter could pass, but not the former. I can't, though imagine a 16' violone or double bass on the organ part, and suspect that the composer didn't worry about the occasional 6/4 chord. That apart, if you're likely to have the players available buy a copy

## Tomàs Luis de Victoria (1584-1611) – Quatercentennial Contemplations

David Hansell

The very first *EMR* (June 1994) contained reviews by writers still to be read in these pages, with several references to the ongoing Lassus and Palestrina quatercentenary commemorations and an introduction to the catalogue of Joed Music. This consisted (and still consists) of, almost exclusively, sacred polyphony of the late Renaissance and thus neatly complemented King's Music/The Early Music Company and Prima la Musica. Now another heavyweight anniversary and a significant development in the availability of Joed Music prompts these musings.

A combination of my own tastes, those of the choirs which I have conducted and their audiences and the venues in which they have performed means that over the years I have conducted more individual works by Tomàs Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) than any other composer. This realisation rather surprised me but reasons were not hard to find. Practically, the ranges of the individual parts are more comfortable for modern singers than those of some other Renaissance composers (Byrd, for instance) and affordable editions are easily available – Joed Music is only a minor detour off my daily commute. But more important than both of these is the fact that Victoria has never disappointed me. In his music, especially the motets, I have consistently found an ability to penetrate and illuminate the heart of a text using a combination of line and texture allied to an awareness of subtle harmonic colour not found in Palestrina, for instance, beautiful though his music is.

Victoria was born in Avila in 1548, became a choirboy in the local cathedral and was then sent to study in Rome. He was to spend 20 years there as student, priest and *maestro*, in which capacity he succeeded Palestrina at the Roman Seminary in 1571. For English Victoria fans, it is an interesting biographical quirk that he was ordained by the last surviving pre-Reformation English bishop, who had sought refuge in Rome. In the late 1580s Victoria returned to Spain and became chaplain to the Dowager Empress Maria at the Royal Convent for Barefoot Clarist nuns, where he also acted as *maestro* to the choir of priests and boys. This was a post which allowed him the time not only to compose new music but also to revise earlier pieces. So congenial was his life there that he resisted offers of employment from several of Spain's major cathedrals.

The notation and original performance circumstances of late Renaissance sacred music are such that the conscientious conductor of a modern SATB choir cannot avoid considering from scratch many fundamental issues such as

performing forces, key/pitch, performing context and all nuances of interpretation – tempo, expression and so on. I have always felt that a starting point for all of this should be what we know of the way in which the music was performed at the time, not necessarily with the hope of recreating those sounds but so we can at least set about trying to respect the aspirations of the composer and his world.

Victoria's own performances of his music seem to have been quite restrained – a choir of a dozen or so (at the absolute most) men singing alto, tenor, baritone and bass. The top line was sung by a mixture of castrati and falsettists. (Although Victoria and his contemporary Spanish choirmasters were responsible for the training of boy musicians, these sang only rarely in the choirs. Their education had more to do with providing adult singers in the future. One choirmaster was reminded not to have all the boys castrated lest a shortage of trained tenors and basses should develop.) The choir was supported more often than we might think by a combination of organ and bassoon. For the double- and triple-choir pieces Victoria did write organ parts to support or even replace some of the vocal lines and for the works in three choirs he even suggested that one of these could be entirely instrumental. So he does offer and could accept some flexibility of scoring.

This is probably just as well. Elsewhere in the Iberian world (including the South American colonies) some establishments maintained large and elaborate ensembles of voices and instruments for the performance of sacred music – and they all performed Victoria. At Seville Cathedral *maestro de capilla* Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599) made it clear what was expected of his players, the *ministriles*. They had to take part in processions, be prepared to play at the cathedral entrance to greet distinguished guests, play at more or less any part of the service, with or instead of the choir and on a variety of woodwind and brass. So striking was this aspect of the Spanish liturgies that in 16th century France a 'mass in the Spanish style' meant a mass with instruments.

Exploring these possibilities has already added a welcome dimension to my own quatercentenary commemorations. (I couldn't wait so started in November 2010). A quasi-liturgical sequence based around the *O quam gloriosum* motet and mass began with a cornett and sackbut rendering of the motet from a rear gallery. The presence of the band also offered the possibility of a 'solution' to the what-do-you-do-when-the-composer-only-sets-the-first-clause-of-the-Agnus-Dei problem. We sang Agnus I, they played

Agnus II, repeating the polyphony from a distant altar, and we then sang it again replacing *miserere nobis* with *dona nobis pacem*. The first half of the concert ended with a *tutti* performance of the opening motet.

Other performing issues are a matter of pragmatism, common sense and context. As far as pitch is concerned I put the music at the pitch at which I think the choir in front of me can most effectively and enjoyably sing it, though do endeavour to keep the pieces in the correct relationship to each other. In this current Victoria series (with an amateur mixed voice choir of 30) this will mean that all the high clef music will be down a tone from its written pitch and the normal clef pieces up a minor third. Such renaissance instructions as we have on tempo and so on are pretty basic – these should relate to the solemnity of the occasion and the nature of the text.

I am well aware that EM fundamentalists may well be horrified by the compromises noted in the previous paragraph. My only defence is that in my specific 2010-11 context it works. The sackbut players obligingly remember their other lives as trombonists and indulge me by playing in four flats and I make life possible for the cornets by giving them transposed parts for A460 instruments. As I said, it works – and the players get work they wouldn't otherwise have had. Specific information about Victoria's pitch standards in Rome and Madrid has proved elusive for me but if I were to be asked to make the 'definitive' quatercentenary recording I'd go for an all-male ATBarB vocal ensemble, sing the normal clef music at pitch and take the high clef pieces down a fourth. I don't think we'd be far out. I'd also follow Guerrero's practice and use cornets, sackbuts, recorders, shawms, harp, bassoon and organ though not all at once.

Perhaps because of his *penchant* for revision Victoria's output was relatively small compared with Palestrina and the prolific Lassus and has nothing like the variety of Byrd. However, the music that we do have shows a consistently high level of both inspiration and craftsmanship and is noted for its quality of passionate intensity. This is often the result of his use of a wider harmonic vocabulary than, for example, Palestrina, though like his Italian contemporary he was content for the conventions of plainchant to govern the general shapes of his melodic lines.

Thus far I have seen little sign of choirs going out of their way to programme Victoria this year. The obvious suspects are doing the six voiced *Requiem* (admittedly a gorgeous piece) but then they do it regularly anyway. Surely a major anniversary should be a stimulus to look at what else is available, so here are a few suggestions for anyone whose 2011 programming is not yet nailed down or who might consider tackling this near-perfect music in future years.

Jon Dixon, the founding editor of Joed Music, has a passion for Victoria and published the complete works in

100 volumes. Following Jon's recent decision to retire from the marketing and sales side of his operation these are gradually being taken over by BC at Prima la Musica, starting with the Victoria editions – see the advert on p. 17. As well as the individual masses *etc.*, the Joed catalogue also includes a number of anthologies and my first recommendation for any ensemble that can sing confidently in eight parts is the *Vespers* sequence that combines psalms, motets and plainchant in a way that thrilled conductor, singers and audience. On that occasion I used just choir and organ. I live in hope that I might re-visit the programme with the addition of a colourful wind ensemble.

It was this *Vespers* sequence that really stimulated my ongoing Victoria explorations. All the works for double and triple choir are rewarding. The sequence for Corpus Christi *Lauda Sion* will test any choir's sense of rhythm, as will the triple choir *Magnificat sexti toni*. But for sheer musical quality the double choir *Salve Regina* is hard to beat and was, indeed, singled out as a 'special' piece in my recent programme by someone who had never heard a note of renaissance polyphony before. The scoring is for unequal choirs (SATB/SATBar in my terms) and the bonus is that Victoria used the music as a basis for a parody mass. Yes, I have performed it and it meets expectations.

Those who prefer to stick to four-part music need not feel left out. The relatively well-known motet/mass pairings of *O magnum mysterium* and *O quam gloriosum* deserve their status and *Ne timeas Maria* is also very beautiful. Then there are the *Tenebrae* responsories, famously recorded by the choir of Westminster Cathedral under George Malcolm. These are not without their clef/pitch/vocal scoring problems, but those who resolve them to suit their own circumstances will be richly rewarded.

On disc, Malcolm's Westminster successors have also served Victoria well (on Hyperion *Helios*) with a number of motet/mass pairings. The Sixteen (Coro) has recorded four Victoria CDs, of which I would particularly recommend 'Devotion to Our Lady'. We must hope that these ensembles and many others feel inspired by the quatercentenary to explore the many treasures that still await them.

*David conducts Esher-based The Ripieno Choir*

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*Victoria & Victorians*

Victoria: Music for Passiontide and Easter & anthems by Parry, Stanford and Elgar

18.6 7.30 Venue tbc

*Songs and Sonnets*

Secular programme inc. Byrd: music from the 1611 *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets*

12.11 7.30 All Saints' Church, Weston Green, Esher

*Victoria - a matter of death and life*

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## LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

... and champagne at Claridges?

Concerts do not usually include the warning announcement to "hurry on over to Claridge's so as not to miss the champagne" but (for those who had paid enough for their tickets) this was the instruction given at the London Handel Society's benefit concert at The Grosvenor Chapel (1 Nov). The concert part of the evening was under the title of "Castrati to Countertenors" and featured counter-tenor Christopher Lowrey, a prize-winner in the 2010 Handel Singing Competition, together with the London Handel Orchestra under Laurence Cummings. Although I didn't pick Lowrey out from the 2010 semi-final as a singer who impressed me as a Handelian singer, I have praised him since. He has an impressively agile and, potentially, a very fine voice. But, on this occasion, the very issues that usually raise my ire in the competition came to the fore, notably his persistent and, so far, seemingly uncontrollable vibrato, overuse of portamento and an apparent inability to trill (other than by use of a vibrato). Even in the long-held opening note of *Dove sei*, where vibrato should surely only be introduced towards the end of the note as an ornament, we had continuous and strong vibrato from the start. Laurence Cummings conducted with his usual vivacity, and contributed some intricate organ solos in the orchestral extracts from *Saul*. The London Handel Players were on their usual excellent form, with notable contributions from the oboists, Mark Radcliffe and Hilary Stock. I hope they all enjoyed their Claridge's dinner!

### SUPER?

Choosing a catchy title seems to be the current order of the day for many groups, the latest offering being 'Super Size Polyphony' for the joint concert given by the 30-strong choir of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge and the 20 singers of the Armonica Consort (3 Nov, Cadogan Hall), the former clad in academic dress. The super size not only included the 40-part offerings by Tallis and Striggio, but the complete 12-part Brumel *Missa Et ecce terrae motus* and the 9-voice canon on *Deo Gratias* by Ockeghem. In contrast, the frequent shuffling around of the singers on stage was (just about) covered by a solo voice singing Hildegard. Curiously, said shuffling about included one session between the arrival on stage and the first piece! The young singers from Cambridge may well have included some new undergraduates which could excuse the lack of cohesion between the singers, many of whom, despite their age, had developed distinctive vibratos. The failings of the Armonica Consort are less forgivable. Apart from the three sopranos, there was a distinctly unsettling

quality to the remaining singers, with strained voices from the men and excessive vibrato throughout. Two of the three sopranos sang fine solos, but were unfortunately not acknowledged in the programme, so I must name all three of them – Anna Sandström, Leoma Dyke and Philippa Murray.

### EXUBERANT EROICA

Some well-placed publicity by the South Bank ensured a large audience at the Queen Elizabeth Hall for the interesting young orchestra 'Spira mirabilis'. Based in a small North Italian town, this self-directed group of players met on the various European training orchestras and decided to form their own band. They make much of their innovative approach to music making, working intensely on a single work and then touring. In this case, it was the *Eroica* Symphony that attracted their attention. Although they occasionally use period instruments, they chose not to in this case – although they made it seem as though they were, both in sound and interpretation. In their pre- and post-concert chats with the audience, they stressed their cooperative music making, without leaders, although it was noticeable that both in the chat and in performance, they relied to a great extent on the contributions of a few key players, notably violinist Lorenza Borrani, the cellist Luise Buchberger (quite inspirational to watch) and oboist Roberto Baltar Gardon. Although there are some questions about their approach and viability, the result was an inspiring and vigorous performance, one that seemed to grow out of their youthful attitude to interpretation and one that I suggest is unlikely to have happened under the control of a conductor. They produced some magical moments of musical intensity, showing that they were not afraid to use extremes of style and emotion, and played with clarity, perception and insight into matters of detail. Naturally there were similarities with the early days of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. It will be interesting to see what the future holds for this band of exceptionally talented youngsters.

### SILLY THINGS

English National Opera does seem to love doing silly things to *Don Giovanni*. Calixto Bieito's 2001/4 production saw the stage covered in blood and gore in one of the most gruesome settings I have seen. Their latest offering (6 Nov) saw theatre director Rufus Norris out of his depth in his operatic debut. But he could take comfort in the fact that he is far from the first opera director to feel that the music is not enough entertainment, so adds layer upon layer of often obscure references and side action to try

distract us from Mozart and his music – music that normally says all there is to be said. The set and costume designer and translator (or more accurately, re-writer) are as much to blame. This production said nothing about 18<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century manners in its bizarre catalogue of scenarios – the best of them being the ‘catalogue’ aria delivered as a Powerpoint presentation. The evening was redeemed by some much better-than-usual singing, notably from Brindley Sherratt as Leporello, Sarah Tynan as Zerlina, John Molloy as Masetto, Iain Paterson as the Don and Robert Murray as Don Ottavio. Sarah Redgwick was a very effective late stand-in as Donna Elvira. Donna Anna was a Brunhilde figure vocally (and, dare I say, physically), singing in a style that didn’t really do Mozart any favours.

#### BITTERSWEET LOVE

One of the young groups that I enjoyed listening to at the Brighton Early Music Festival’s ‘White Night’ event in October was Galán. Shortly after that event they gave a more formal concert in London, under the beguiling title of ‘Sweet Torments’ (7 Nov, Grosvenor Chapel). With theorbo and harpsichord accompaniment, the three sopranos gave a programme of words and music exploring “the perennial theme of bittersweet love... from the agony of romantic liaisons to the ecstasy of religious love”, with much of the music coming from that composed for the singing ladies of the court of Alfonso II of Ferrara in the 1590s – the *Concerto delle Donne*. Using the space of the chapel well, with items sung from the gallery and the semi-enclosed Lady Chapel, they presented the various emotions of the music convincingly. Their three voices manage to both contrast and blend, to varying degrees. Alison Hill has the sort of clear as a bell, agile, unaffected and precise voice that, to me, is ideal for most of the early repertoire – and she is already making her way in the early music vocal world. Katy Hill also has an impressive voice with a solid lower register, but has a tendency to slide downhill rather than step gracefully. Lucy Page exhibits far too many operatic tendencies for my taste, although she occasionally showed that she was capable of reining in her vibrato, at least at low volume – but she really must learn to acknowledge her fellow musicians when she takes a bow. To remedy this lapse, I will name the snubbed harpsichordist as Christopher Bucknall; Manuel Minguillon gave an exquisitely fluid interpretation of a Bartolotti piece on theorbo.

#### AND ANOTHER VESPERS

Rounding off a year full of Monteverdi Vespers, the Gabrieli Consort brought their version to Christ Church, Spitalfields (Thur 11). And, yet again, it was the gloriously soaring voice of Charles Daniels that set the show on the road with his declamatory *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende*. The acoustic of Christ Church suits music of this era rather better than the slightly less reverberant St John’s, Smith Square, and Paul McCreesh encouraged his forces (12 singers and 12 players) to use the acoustic

effectively. Most of the contextualising chant that was a feature of earlier McCreesh performances was omitted, but the re-ordering the 1610 music was retained to reflect the form of a possible service format and to make more musical sense. The opening Psalm/Motet pair of *Dixit Dominus* and *Nigra Sum* were followed by the remaining four Psalms sung in succession, separated by organ toccatas (played beautifully by Jan Waterfield) with the motet *Pulchra es* following the final *Lauda Jerusalem*. After the *Capitulum* we heard the sequence of *Ave Maris Stella*, *Magnificat* and the instrumental Sonata, then the Collect of the Annunciation and the Versicle and Response *Dominus vobiscum – Benedicamus Domino – Deo Gratias*, the work concluding with the motets *Duo Seraphim* and *Audi Coelum*, separated by another organ toccata. This ordering worked well, given a satisfying sense of musical and emotional progression. Charles Daniels walks on musical water as far as I am concerned, his agile, elegant and expressive voice sending shivers up the spine – his concluding *Audi Coelum* was exquisite, although his echo seemed to be singing as he made his premature way to the Brick Lane curry houses. Close behind on the walking on water stakes were the contrasting tones of the two altos, the purity of David Allsopp and the slightly edgier voice of Mark Chambers. Catherine Martin and Oliver Webber excelled, as ever, on the Monteverdi violins made specially for a recording a few years ago. Paul McCreesh allowed the music to unfold on its own terms, sensibly avoiding the tendency to push the volume or force the pace – and, equally sensibly, avoiding any tendency to conduct in the more intimate numbers.

#### THE ACADEMY FOR LOVERS

The latest production from Royal Academy Opera was *Così fan tutte* (subtitled *The School for Lovers*) performed in the intimate surroundings of the Royal Academy of Music’s Sir Jack Lyons Theatre (22 Nov). Having railed against many over-blown productions of opera, it was a delight to watch this straightforward production with a simple set, a clever contemporary interpretation of the plot, and a focus on the music. Director John Cox set the action in an Academy – one that included music students as well as a Faculty of Behavioural Science, headed by Alfonso. We open as he lectures his students on his hypothesis that women are genetically programmed to be promiscuous, only to be challenged by two of his male students (conveniently second-subject actors and army reservists) who quote their girlfriends (music students and sisters) as examples to disprove their tutors’ theory. Their landlady, Despina, is signed by Alfonso as a research student. And so the plot evolves, raising the inevitable questions about male and female behaviour – and behavioural science itself, when tested by deception. A brilliant and obvious conceit, and an interpretation I have not seen before. The performance featured an excellent cast, one of two casts over the four performances. I don’t normally name singers in these alternate-cast student performances but these deserved it – Alexander Sprague and Marcus

Farnsworth as Ferrando and Guglielmo; Runette Botha as the sensible Fiordiligi and Kate Symonds-Joy as the coquettishly frisky Dorabella; and Aofie Miskelly and John-Owen Miley-Read as Despina and Alfonso. Despite their apparent youth, all showed considerable promise, and I will forgive them that there was not one properly sung trill. Jane Glover directed the orchestra: modern instruments, but with a commendable sense of period style

#### ABDUCTION OF THE LIBRETTO

Mozart's Singspiel *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* is not an easy work to stage, and an even less easy work to present in a concert version. The OAE, innovative as ever, came up with what might have been a solution to the latter problem by replacing all the vocal text by a newly composed text and narrative by Simon Butteriss (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 24 Nov). The problem was the nature of the text and narration (which was too clever by a lot more than half), and the what-a-clever-boy-am-I demeanour of the narrator (the author) himself – both became increasingly irritating as the evening progressed. The text was riddled with barely disguised contempt for all things Turkish and Muslim that came close to being offensive – to me, let alone any Muslims present. It is a complete reversal of the sympathetic portrayal of the (missing) Pasha Selim, whose spoken role in the original version seems to portray exactly the opposite view of people of a different faith and culture. This was to have been conducted by the late Sir Charles Mackerras. His replacement, Bernard Labadie, made up for the narration by bringing a sympathetic touch to the music, with good support from the OAE, notably in the 'Turkish music' sections. The singers included Susan Gritton as Konstanze, the impressive Malin Christensson as Blonde and Alistair Miles as Osmin. This was an interesting venture that could have worked given a far better narration and translation.

#### A DEPRESSING EVENING

If it weren't for the beauty of Purcell's exquisite music, I fear most of the Wigmore Hall audience would have committed ritual suicide at the conclusion of the concert by Les Talens Lyriques and Sandrine Piau of 15 mournful ditties from Purcell's *Harmonia Sacra* (4 Dec), such was the unrelenting gloom of the texts. No wonder that the encore was announced as "something a little more gay", a particularly apt preface to an extract from *The Fairy Queen*. The most committed Purcellian might have been forgiven for finding the concert rather hard work. It would be easy to criticise Sandrine Piau for her faltering enunciation of English, with its un-Gallic consonants, and her difficulties with the natural flow of Purcell free-flowing recitatives, but she produced an elegiac tone and an emotional context that worked well for most of the pieces. Laurence Dreyfus and Elizabeth Kenny excelled in their gamba and lute playing, although Christophe Rousset's harpsichord continuo was too busy and his organ playing consistently

too loud, the latter not helped by the organ's prominent quinty initial transients, adding a little hiccup to each note.

#### YOUNG COMPETITION WINNERS

One of the nicest aspects of this reviewing lark is watching the career development of young musicians as they make their way on the professional circuit after their time at conservatories. The York Early Music International Young Artists Competition, as it is now called, is a gathering place of such musicians and it is lovely when performers that I have met there send me their debut CDs or otherwise keep me in touch with their activities. The winners of the 2009 competition were Ensemble Meridiana, a group of musicians from Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and England, who like many other such groups, met during their time at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. They had already won the first and audience prizes in the 2007 International Telemann Competition in Magdeburg and have now, as part of their York prize, recorded their first CD, due for release later this year. They gave their London debut concert at Kings Place (16 Dec) as part of the 'Northern Lights' festival, presented in association with the York National Centre for Early Music. With their versatile line up of violin, oboe/recorder, recorder/bassoon, viola da gamba and harpsichord, it was inevitable that Telemann would feature strongly in their repertoire, and this concert gave a contrasting selection of his delightful works (including the two written for their main line up of recorder, oboe and violin), together with seasonal contributions from the jovial Michel Corrette and Corelli, the latter's *Concerto Fatto per la notte di natale* played in an interesting version for flutes published by Walsh & Hare in 1725. This was a thoroughly professional performance by a very talented group of musicians, displaying both the expected technical prowess but also the musical insight to bring life to the music, notably in the opening *Concerto* (TWV43:a3) with its slightly mysterious opening and virtuosic concluding *Vivace*.

#### MUSIC IN 18th-CENTURY BRITAIN CONFERENCE

The Foundling Hospital hosted a fascinating conference (26 Nov) on aspects of British 18th century music, with speakers delving into such topics as the London fair theatres (notably the various ballad operas performed at Bartholomew Fair), the Italian duet movements that Handel re-used in *Messiah* (and how these related to his other uses of pre-existing compositions), the musical life of the Curzons of Kedleston Hall (particularly during the 1730/50s) and the 3rd Duke of Rutland (from the archives of Belvoir Castle), and the sometime turbulent lives of the violin maker Lockett Hill (hung for horse-stealing in 1810) and violinist Carbonelli (who became the purveyor of wine to the Court of George III). On the same evening at the Foundling Hospital, the group L'Avventura London (it seems to have gone through several name-changes in its brief life) gave a concert of music by Felice Giardini (1716-

86), an Italian violinist and composer who spent most his career in London, becoming a Governor of the Foundling Hospital and running the annual benefit concerts after Handel's death. The programme note enthusiastically referred to him as a "brilliant composer", noting that most of his music has not been heard since Giardini's own time. On the basis of the music performed during this concert, in an occasionally pretty late Rococo/early classical idiom, I fear that this obscurity was well deserved. To call his music harmonically and melodically unadventurous would be putting it mildly, although there were occasional flashes of competence. The players did their best to bring some life to the music, with some good contributions from Erik Dippenaar, harpsichord, Poppy Wilshaw, cello and Emily Baines, recorders, but Giardini's vocal works suffered under the obtrusive vibrato of the singer.

#### LONDON BACH SOCIETY' 20<sup>th</sup> BACHFEST

Although it wasn't my original plan for the rather awkwardly named LBS 3<sup>rd</sup> Bach Singers Prize Competition 2010, I rather like going to the semi-finals of singing competitions rather than the finals, not least because I often hear singers that I particularly like but who don't make it through to the final. In this case, only four of the ten semi-finalists were able to go through – Thomas Elwin, Sarah Power, Greg Tassell and Rachel Redmond. Unusually for me, three of the four were singers that had impressed me. Others that I liked in the semi-finals were Terence Ayebare, Alexandra Hutton, Iria Perestrelo and Leo Tomita. Lucy Page and Adrian Horwood suffered from too much vibrato and rather unsteady voices, and the singer again failed to acknowledge her accompanist (cf p. 9). Each of the ten singers had to sing a recitative and aria from a Bach Passion or the Christmas Oratorio, in the superb setting of Bartholomew-the-Great (2 Nov). The eventual winner of the prize was soprano Sarah Power.

Of the other events in this year's BachFest, one was borrowed from the Royal Academy of Music's monthly Bach Cantata Series and another was a contribution to the regular weekly early evening concerts at the National Portrait Gallery. The latter was an imaginary eavesdropping on a Bach family musical gathering at home with flute/recorder, oboe/recorder, violin, cello and harpsichord – unfortunately, I could only stay for the first 15 minutes. But I did get to the final event of the Festival – a concert I was told both that "you will hate it" and to "keep an open mind". I managed to achieve both, in reverse order! This was an evening aimed at the "18-30 Bach Club", an enterprise set up by the LBS last year. For reasons that remain obscure, other than the fact that he is a friend of the LBS President (who gave a gushing, if rather inaccurate, introduction), they invited a pianist called James Rhodes to perform. He is too old to be eligible for membership of the 18-30 Club, although he looks, and behaves, as though he is actually too young. He is also, in my view, the sort of character that most

people would go out of their way to prevent their 18 to 30-year-old friends or family from associating with. He presents a type of dark, self-obsessed, suicidal and anti-establishment persona that seems intended to appeal to the unfortunate self-harming teenage girls that I experienced during my time as a Samaritan. In his publicity interviews, website and chat, he makes much of his financially privileged background, tinted by apparent sex abuse as a child, dysfunctional parents, teenage shoplifting and arson, drug taking, various breakdowns and being sectioned and detained in psychiatric hospitals. He has had an on-off relationship with music, only recently taking up piano playing after many years' absence making money in the city. He seems to use his playing as a form of therapy and emotional release ("music saved my life"). So far, so good. As for his actual playing, he can certainly play a lot of notes at more-or-less the same time, but only rarely are they the notes that the composer asked him to play. His programme was a Bach Partita, Busoni's version of Bach's *Chaconne* and Chopin's *Romance* from his first piano concerto – an odd combination for a Bach Club. Each piece was bashed out at great volume, with little regard for the underlying mood of the piece or any sense of transmitting the composer's view of the music, rather than Rhodes' own rather mannered interpretations. His verbal observations about the pieces included the suggestion that Bach was bi-polar (calling the *Chaconne* "the most depressing piece ever"), and opining that "Bach needed a blow-job". Although by no means the advertised sell-out, there was a sizeable audience there – but it would be interesting to know how many were at last year's 18-30 concert, and how many will return next year. I got the impression that many were personal friends and family of Rhodes. Were any other *EMR* readers there? I would be interested in hearing what others thought of this.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE ST JOHN'S, SMITH SQUARE 25<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

This festival started life as the Hazard Chase Festival, but has recently been directed by Stephen Layton, whose concluding Polyphony *Messiahs* have become a landmark on London's Christmas music scene. It opened with a concert that I always look forward to with one of the rare British appearances of the annual reincarnation of the European Union Baroque Orchestra, also celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (12 Dec). After an exhausting audition process, the selected young players begin several months of intense rehearsals under distinguished directors before touring, in this case, four different programmes together with the one-off Corelli extravaganza that I missed earlier this year, also at St John's, Smith Square. The only other concert they gave in the UK was this one, the last for the 2010 version of EUBO, with the programme 'Handel, a dramatic Genius'. The whole focus of the orchestra should,

1. I checked his website, and rather enjoyed a couple of movements from the French Suites – one up on most performers, he plays sensible *da capo* embellishments. CB

of course, be on the young musicians, so I found it disturbing that they were reduced to an accompanying role for most of the evening, with Swedish soprano Maria Keohane stealing the limelight. She apparently made two tours with EUBO last year, and is also the focus of their most recent CD, raising questions, for me at least, as to why EUBO should be putting so much effort into promoting a singer who has already made her mark on the vocal circuit. I have nothing against her as a singer (she has a compelling stage presence and a fine Handelian voice which I hope she retains despite her operatic work in Verdi) or personally – I am told that she is a friend of the EUBO Musical Director (and this evening's conductor) Lars Ulrik Mortensen, and is no doubt happy with the promotional prospects that touring with EUBO brings. As ever, the 18 young members of EUBO (from 12 countries) were excellent, notably the solo contributions from their leader, Huw Daniel, one of the past EUBO members invited back as concertmasters. Other notable contributions came from the Hungarian violinist Kinga Ujszászi and the Irish cellist Carina Drury. Maintaining my feeling that the focus should be on the young players, I will, as in previous years, express my concern about Mortensen's ostentatiously extravagant and flamboyant conducting – something else that seems designed to take the focus away from them. I recall with affection Andrew Manze's direction of EUBO where he stepped back from his normal solo role to work cooperatively with the young players – I would welcome a return to this style of direction.

Following a performance of the first three cantatas from the Christmas Oratorio with his impressive student choir from Trinity College Cambridge, Stephen Layton ended the festival with his annual St John's *Messiah* (23 Dec) with his choir Polyphony and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment – a welcome appearance from them after several years when a modern instrument orchestra has been used. Although by no means a specialist 'early music' choir, Polyphony are flexible enough to sing in an entirely appropriate manner – I was particularly impressed with the youthful soprano line-up, who demonstrated clean, agile and neatly articulated voices. But the exposed fugal entries of many of the individual works showed that there was similar expertise in all the vocal lines. James Gilchrist excelled in the key tenor role, bringing the first of many magical moments on his very first line – a wonderful moment of stillness before the repeat of 'Comfort Ye'. Iestyn Davies and Derek Welton also impressed. Elin Manahan Thomas displayed rather too much vibrato in 'Rejoice', and also tended to rush her melismatic lines, but sounded much better in 'How beautiful'. Of the players, Jonathan Manson and Kate Aldridge (cello and bass) deserve special mention. Stephen Layton conducted with his usual intense involvement. I have heard a number of these performances and always find them inspirational and revealing. He sensibly directed the audience to their feet for the Hallelujah Chorus, and held the silence at the end long enough to prevent the usual applause.

## GREENWICH EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

As well as the usual promotional concerts by the staff (and, very occasionally, students) of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance during the annual Early Music Exhibition there were a few concerts that, on paper at least, looked more likely to fit the 'International' element of the weekend's title. The first was a lunchtime concert in St Alfege Church (12 November) featuring a reproduction of 4,500 year old The Golden Lyre of Ur, one of four instruments (three lyres and a harp) discovered by Sir Leonard Wooley in his 1929 excavations of the Royal Cemetery of Ur. The one donated to Baghdad Museum was damaged during looting in 2003 but, with help from the RAF and Liverpool University, amongst many others, has now been recreated through a project led by Andy Lowings, who introduced the concert. Music played by Bill Taylor was accompanied by poems and stories from ancient Sumer and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* together with the story of the instrument and the circumstances of its burial in the Royal tomb, along with its last unfortunate player who appears to have continued playing in her ex-employer's grave until her own death by self-administered poisoning – Wooley found the bones of her hands still positioned where there strings of the lyre would have been, had they survived. Unfortunately, no information was given about the music played, which appeared to be more an improvisatory response to the rather earnest and primary school teacherish narration from Jennifer Sturdy than an attempt at music of the Sumerian period. The eight strings produced an extremely buzzy sound. Readers will probably know the similar lyre in the British Museum – to modern ears, this example certainly looked a great deal more impressive than it sounded.

Duo Corde (with the unusual combination of violin and cello – Anne Marie Christensen and Amélie Addison) won the recent early music competition at Trinity and gave an afternoon concert in the Old Royal Naval College Chapel, accompanied by a persistent and unpleasant electronic buzz. Although it was nice to hear the sound of a solo violin in such a large space (a rare acoustic delight in the UK), this was a singularly inappropriate venue for such intimate music, based on the theory that such 18<sup>th</sup>-century music was performed without continuo. Although there was some chordal playing from the cello, it did not take over the continuo role, as might have been expected – indeed, there was far more double stopping from the violin. This is an interesting programme concept that deserves a more sympathetic venue.

In a rather non-PC bit of promotion, particularly from a music conservatoire, the sexy images of the four young ladies of Quartet New Generation was the key feature of the advertising for the whole weekend. Equally curiously, for an early music festival, this group specialises in contemporary music, although they did add pieces by Frescobaldi, Handel and Bach to their programme of

music by living composers. Their phenomenal technique was well suited to the modern pieces, although they were less at home in the early works.

Although Trinity College is lucky to have the chance of using the Old Royal Naval College Chapel, it really does need to think more about how appropriate a space it is for chamber concerts – or, indeed, for any concerts at all unless they solve the problem of the persistent buzz. Another example of a misplaced concert was *Haydn à L'Anglaise*, given by Café Mozart, with guests Sophie Bevan, soprano, James Atherton, tenor, and Steven Devine, fortepiano. This was a curious affair, only really saved by some excellent singing from the guests, notably the very promising Sophie Bevan (whom I have praised many times for her operatic performances but who showed herself well able to bring her voice down to chamber proportions) and Steven Devine's entertaining piano playing, very much in the spirit of the music. As the title suggests, the programme was based on the music of Haydn in the rather odd conversions of instrumental works into songs that had become popular in England before Haydn first visited, together with pieces by his pupil, Thomas Haigh.

#### FESTIVAL NOX ILLUMINATA ST PÖLTEN

Continuing the formula of last year's festival in the snow-covered Austrian town of St Pölten (and several years of such events in Basel), this year's Nox Illuminata Festival ranged from straight early music performance to pure jazz (7-11 Dec). Gluhwein and burning tree trunks were welcome introductions to the first concert – a lively reinterpretation of the first three cantatas in *Weihnachtsoratorium Revisited* given by morethanmusic (a mixture of period and contemporary jazz instruments) and the Larynx Kammerchor, directed (as was the whole festival) by Ann Allen and Mark Seale. Making very effective use of the sumptuously decorated main hall and foyer of the Kirchenmusik Konservatorium, the first cantata was set towards the end of a rather risqué English Xmas dinner party, and concluded with a singing and seduction competition between two tenors, the winner getting all the girls – as they do. The second cantata was set during nibbles and flagons of wine in the foyer, cabaret style, with some slinky dancing and gospel swing choir, segueing into the third cantata as we processed quietly back into the main hall. Julie Comparini and Jakob Pilgram excelled both as singers and actors – as indeed did the whole cast.

The pure early music contribution came from the ensemble savadi, (winners of the 2003 York Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition) in a beautifully staged presentation of vocal works by Schein, Monteverdi, Schütz, Rovetta, Marotta, Cozzolani and Kerle etc., with Bernadi's *O dies laetitia* giving the programme its title. Like the remaining Nox Illuminata concerts, it was given on the black-box stage of the St Pölten Festspielhaus, with the audience seated, not always

comfortably, on cushions, carpets and boxes amidst flowers and little chocolates and with a morphing backdrop of projected late Renaissance and Baroque images and subtly evolving lighting. Using a series of platform stages, the two sopranos, Kristine Jaunalksne and Ulrike Hofbauer, gave us a very moving and gently theatrical presentation of the works, moving gracefully around the audience and interacting with each other and the audience. Their voices both contrasted and blended, suiting this repertoire perfectly. They were supported by harpist Marie Bournisien, who also gave a beautifully fluid performance of solo works by Rossi and Cima.

Under the title of 'Baroque Re-Imagined', the Matteis Project gave a concert based, rather loosely, on the music of Nicola Matteis. A very lengthy spoken introduction that seemed to start with the group leader's personal history was not the best opening. Apart from a very brief example of fine continuo playing (unfortunately on a harpsichord amplified to match the electronic sound of the amplified violin) from Tamar Halperin, the rest of the programme was almost entirely an amalgamation of prog rock and jazz styles from Pink Floyd onwards, the link with the music of Matteis being minimal. I am not sure what audience this was aimed at. There was not enough of the period influence, or the musical integrity, to engage early music lovers and I would have thought that the contemporary side of things was rather too formulaic to appeal to a jazz audience.

'Phased and Funked' was the title of the next concert, with three examples of contemporary minimalist music separated by extracts from Bach's first cello suite, played with delightfully exploratory panache by Caroline Ritchie – I could have done with hearing a lot more of her playing. In a near repeat of the music at a similar concert in last year's festival, Tamar Halperin played Reich's Piano Phase against a recording she had made of the other piano part on her laptop, and Benjamin Brodbeck played one of his Reich-inspired works for marimba. More Reich came from guitarist Maurizio Grandinetti, also played against a recording, although in this case the balance was upset by having the live guitar louder than the recorded version.

The final concert was given by the festival director's own band, mediva:plugged, a compelling combination of medieval music and modern jazz, with an emphasis on the latter. Using short melodies that have survived from medieval codices and manuscripts, and a combination of period and jazz instruments, the eight players built a fascinating range of sounds and moods in the sort of musical affair that would have filled Wembley in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The period performers entered into the spirit of the occasion with gusto, with brilliant contributions from Tobie Miller on hurdy gurdy and Michelangelo Rinaldi on portative, friscaletto, schalmei – and accordion.

## MUSIC for VIOLS

Robert Oliver

*Doulce memoire: Sound out my Voice! Italian madrigals and bastarda music for viol consort.* Orlando Viols 55' 54"  
Lunaris CD LC18240 www.orlandoviols.de

The five players play treble, tenor, two bass viols, lirone and violone, which makes for some gorgeous dark sonorities. All the usual suspects are represented – Ortiz (*O felici occhi miei* and *Douce memoire*) Dalla Casa (*Alla dolce ombra*, *Ancor che col partire*) Bassani, Rognoni, and Ferrabosco's *Sound out my voice*. Their approach to this is typical. The bass viol plays the divisions beautifully, accompanied by the consort (occasionally plucking) including lirone and violone which sometimes drop down the octave, as it were orchestrating the madrigal. This gives a wonderful performance, expressive, lyrical and beautifully poised. They bring fresh ideas to this repertoire including, for example in the Dalla Casa *Ancor.....* sharing the bastarda divisions between members of the consort, Ortiz's divisions on treble voice of *Douce memoire* played on the tenor viol: a lovely boxy sound, and a wonderful piece by Bassani with divisions for the Violone, a great boomy bass, but clear as a bell. The playing is mellifluous, beautifully tuned, agile and deft, and always full of passion and light. Highly recommended

*What if a Day: Music from Peter Leycester's "A booke of Lessons for the Lyra-Viole"* Johanna Valencia *Lyra Viol* 70' 20"  
ORF CD 3098/LC 11428 johanna.richard@utanet.at

This is a remarkable recording in many ways. It's very long, over 70 minutes, it's got 49 tracks, ranging from 34" to 4'52" in length, with the majority around a minute long. There is no searching after spurious variety of plucking some pieces, and such composers as are named, with the sole exception of Jenkins, are unknown outside a limited circle of viol players. But most surprising of all is that it is a joy to listen to. The playing is free of mannerism, but full of understanding, and Johanna Valencia, who came to the viol from the guitar, rather than the 'cello, copes with 8 different tunings, relying on them to give the variety the listening experience surely needs. This she and they duly provide. The 'Bagge=pipe way" (four strings only), Alfonso-way sharpe, where the bottom string is tuned down to a low A – the tuning Corkine uses for his divisions, and one of the longer pieces, the anonymous divisions on 'Jenny', in this tuning, is reminiscent of his 'Whoopie doe me no harm good man' and as much fun to listen to. Those apart, the Jenkins pieces are the most interesting and touching, and there is also a suite by William Lawes, with his familiar angular melodies, leaping from high to low. Other familiar names include William Young and Charles Coleman. It's an exceptionally inter-

esting recording, and while all viol players would enjoy it, it deserves a much wider audience than its apparently esoteric repertoire might gain it.

*John Jenkins Fantasy Suites* Hamburger Ratsmusik, Simone Eckert *bass viol, dir* 62' 27"  
Phoenix 141

Four of Jenkins' fantasies for violin, bass viol and continuo make up most of this recording, A minor, E minor, C minor and G minor, with the familiar (because published years ago by Schott) D minor sonata. In addition the marvellous divisions in A major, and lyra viol pieces from the Goess Manuscript give a pleasing variety to the programme. Curiously enough, the group photo shows only the theorbist, Ulrich Wedemeier (playing a 10-course lute in the photo) the organist, Michael Fürst, and the bass viol player, Simone Eckert, but omits the violinist Christoph Heidermann, and I would like to have seen him because I enjoyed his playing so much. He has a lovely sweet and resonant tone, very true intonation, very sparing use of vibrato, and beautifully articulated playing. Not that the photographed members aren't also good. Simone Eckert can certainly play well, with very secure intonation at the top of instrument, where Jenkins regularly travels at high altitudes, with his trickster wide leaps, rapid passage-work, and lovely melodic ideas. I also enjoyed her playing of the lyra pieces, free of mannerism, and the pieces themselves, full of contrast even between the two allemandes. Sometimes but not always, the balance favours the violin too much. The viol sound retreats particularly in the rapid passage-work in the A major suite, but is less of a problem in the C minor suite (with lute) and not at all in the G minor suite which concludes the disc with both lute and organ (lovely 'woody' tone). Here the opening fantasy has a wonderfully rhapsodic conclusion, beautifully played by all, the exhilarating Ayre, and a lovely zestful Courant. Marvellous music, often very touching, beautifully played, and not often recorded. Highly recommended.

*Fleur de Lys. The solo suite before Bach: French Viol Suites from 1660-1700* Charles Medlam *bass viol*, William Carter, *theorbo* 71' 04"

Music by de Machy, Dubuisson, Hotman, Marais, St-Colombe

This recording celebrates the repertoire before Marais, mostly for unaccompanied bass viol, and concludes with Marais' *Tombeau pour Mr de Ste Colombe* accompanied by the theorboe. Most will know Charles Medlam's playing through his ensemble London Baroque, in which he plays both baroque cello and bass viol, but I hadn't heard him as

a solo viol player before. Of course he is a very accomplished player, with a mature technique and a rigorous approach to the music, but for me more a 'cellist than a bass viol player. Having said that, he has recorded here a repertoire which has mostly been neglected, and in playing it well, makes the disc well worth getting. It's a nice programmatic touch to conclude with Marais' tribute to his viol teacher, and the repertoire presented is all very enjoyable and interesting. It is aimed at 'cellists, with a note for 'cellists describing this repertoire as part of the context of Bach's solo suites for 'cello. It's marketed under the 'cello classics' label, but deserves a wider audience.

**Bach Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord** Mary Pells *gamba*, Martin Knizia *hpscd* 53' 40"  
PPD 010

There has to be a good reason to record these pieces. I already have five or six versions of them, and I imagine that virtually everyone who has any ambitions to play the bass viol well will have played them. Mary Pells has a good technique, adequate to their demands, and plays them well. She is well accompanied by Martin Knizia, playing a very sonorous Ruckers copy, which seems more closely recorded than the viol. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, the trio-sonata texture demands this, as everyone knows. The playing is well-poised and the ensemble excellent, but opportunities to lift and shape through variety of articulation and tempo are not taken, for example, the Andante of the D major suite is very legato, very correct and a touch inflexible. In the Allegro of the same suite, the articulation is very nicely together, but not varied. Similar comments can be applied to the G minor no. 3, the most demanding of them, which she plays with a nicely confident dexterity, but doesn't relish its more exuberant flourishes and chords. I enjoyed the adaptation of the organ trio sonata BWV 526, a very suitable piece to play in this way, transposed from its original key to D minor.

**Viola da gamba concertata** Siegfried Pank *gamba*, Juliane Banse S, Mitteldeutsche Barocksolisten, Leipzig 62' 38"  
Raumklang RKG 9806 52'  
Abel, Handel, Telemann

A compilation of pieces for varying ensembles in which the viola da gamba takes a prominent role makes for very satisfying listening, rather akin to a well-constructed concert programme, but which would present considerable logistical obstacles in assembling (and paying for) the various combinations dreamed up by these composers. Telemann's Concerto in A major is for viola da gamba and strings, that in A minor is for recorder (Robert Ehrlich), needs strings, and bass viol of course, while his Sinfonia in F major needs Cornet, 3 sackbuts (Bläser Collegium, Leipzig), recorder, violin, oboe, and viola da gamba. An opera aria by Abel: *Frena le belle lagrime* from *Sifari*, and Handel's cantata *Tra le fiamme* for soprano, 2 recorders,

oboe, violin and obligato viol (the only work with which I am familiar) bring in the excellent soprano Juliane Banse, who sings with minimal and well-controlled vibrato, very true and beautiful sound. The playing is lively and rhythmic throughout and Siegfried Pank's playing is always superb. Highly recommended on all counts.

**F. Couperin Portrait d'Iris: Suites for viole de gambe; pièces de clavecin** Emmanuelle Gigue Tr & B viols, Bruno Procopio *hpscd* 67' 34" 59806  
Paraty 409 212

Couperin's two suites for bass viol are among the most demanding music written for the instrument, and they receive fine performances here, for example the very fast *La chemise blanche* with its punctuation and trills in awkward places. She plays a Colichon copy with a nicely bright top string, and her performances are enjoyably straightforward, and although she tends to emphasise the beginnings of the phrase rather than its arrival point, she plays with great poise and feeling. The harpsichord solos, all very well played on a beautifully sonorous 18<sup>th</sup> century instrument, are taken from various *ordres*. The recording concludes with the final *Concert* from *Les Goûts Réunis* with the treble viol playing the upper part, as was sometimes done by Couperin's esteemed viol-playing colleague, Alarius. This is a slightly less poised performance, best in the very beautifully played Sarabande. The programme is inspired by a Watteau portrait of an exquisitely dressed young woman called Iris, a fitting image for the grace and purity of Couperin's musical imagination. Even his 'easy' music seems to demand all the poise and understanding one can bring to it. The accompaniment is amplified with a second viol (Sylvia Abramowicz) and theorbo/guitar (Rémi Cassaigne).

**Corrette Les Délices de la Solitude** Seung-Yeon Lee *vlc*, Bassorum Vox (Se-Hee Kim *vlc*, Fernando Reyes Ferón, *guitar/theorbo*, Mami Kurumada, *hpscd*) 61' 05"  
Coviello Classics COV 2-100

I didn't expect to enjoy this as much as I did, as I have never been drawn to Corrette's music, but it is very attractive and vital, with striking ideas and some very lovely slow movements. While there are less interesting pieces, the whole is very engaging. The playing is of a very high standard. The solo cello is more closely recorded than its accompaniment, but for all that is often brilliantly played, with a nice urgency and vigour. He is a modern 'cellist who has made a special study of baroque cello, and he brings an assured technique and a good feeling for the Italianate style of this French music. He plays an 18<sup>th</sup> century instrument with a lovely woody tone. His accompanying team are fully up to the demands, and the recording is of more than just collectors' interest.

A facsimile of Corrette's original publication is available from The Early Music Company Ltd: price £7.50

94

19 Handel Esther (HWV 50a 19)

Accomp.

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Haman  
B

Bassi

Turn not, O

95

13

speak, his growing fury stay, let mer-cy in thy sight\_\_ be found! O speak, O

5:

Queen, thy face\_\_ a-way, be-hold me, be-hold me pro-strate

17

speak, his growing fury stay, let mer-cy in thy sight\_\_ be found, let mer-cy\_\_

9

on the ground, be-hold me pro-strate on\_\_ the ground! O speak, O

21

in thy sight\_\_ be found!

This is the original 1720 version. In 1732, the bass part is marked *Senza cembalo, teorba, harpa e Bassons*.

## Tomás Luis de Victoria

1611 – 2011

## MASSES

- V3 Alma Redemptoris SATB+SATB  
 V37 Ascendens Christus SSATTB  
 V39 Ave maris stella SAT(T)B  
 V19 Ave Regina SATB+SATB  
 V41 De Beata Maria SATTB  
 V43 Dum complerentur S(S)AATTB  
 V45 Gaudeamus SSAAT(T)B  
 V15 Laetatus sum SATB+SSABa+SATB  
 V25 O Magnum mysterium S(S)ATB  
 V47 O Quam gloriosum SATB  
 V49 4-part Requiem SATB  
 V51 6-part Requiem SSATTB  
 V53 Pro Victoria SSATB+SATB  
 V55 Quam pulchri sunt SATB  
 V58 Quarti toni S(S)ATB  
 V23 Salve Regina SSAB+SATB  
 V35 Simile est Regnum SATB(SATB)  
 V59 Surge propera SSATB  
 V33 Trahe me post te SAATB  
 V7 Vidi speciosam SSA(A)TTB

## HOLY WEEK MUSIC &amp; EASTER

- V101 Palm Sunday, Pueri Hebraeorum SATB  
 V103 Palm Sunday, St Matthew Passion SATB  
 V105 Palm Sunday, O Domine Jesu SAATTB  
 V107 Maundy Thursday, Lamentations I-III  
 V109 Maundy Thursday, 6 Tenebrae responsories  
 V111 Maundy Thursday, Canticle of Zachary  
 V113 Maundy Thursday, Miserere mei S(S)ATB  
 V115 Maundy Thursday, Tantum ergo SSATB  
 V117 Maundy Thursday, Benedicta sit Trinitas  
 V119 Good Friday, Lamentations I-III  
 V121 Good Friday, 6 Tenebrae responsories  
 V123 Good Friday, St John Passion SSATB  
 V125 Good Friday, O vos omnes (SATB)  
 V127 Good Friday, Improperia SATB(SATB)  
 V129 Holy Saturday, Lamentations I-III  
 V131 Holy Saturday, 6 Tenebrae responsories  
 V133 Holy Saturday, Vexilla Regis SSAATB  
 V135 Easter, Victimae paschali SSAT+SATB  
 V137 Easter, Ardens est cor meum SSATTB  
 V139 Easter, Surrexit pastor bonus SSATTB

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## HANDEL

## Esther HWV 50a

An edition was produced by King's Music rather hurriedly in 1995 for a MEMF course with Nic McGegan, based on Chrysander corrected with information in Winton Dean's *Handel's Oratorios and Masques*. This has now been revised by John Butt for a recording by The Dunedin Concert and also for performances in Seattle by Steven Stubbs. The provisional score is available at £30.00, though as yet lacking John's introduction. Typesetting was, as usual, done by Brian Clark.

*Sample, half-size excerpt on previous page*

The Early Music Company, The New House, The Fen,  
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## HANDEL

## Rinaldo HWV 7a

This edition, by Brian Clark and Clifford Bartlett, was prepared for Nicholas Kraemer and Trinity College of Music for a production in Summer 2011. The score is available now (£30.00); orchestral parts will be produced in the next few weeks. As usual with Handel operas, we feel that a vocal score is an anachronism: the 'full score' rarely has more than four instrumental staves, often fewer, and it is helpful for the singer to see what the orchestra plays. It is no bigger than a vocal score, and costs £30.00.

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## SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SONGS &amp; DIALOGUES

David Hill

Danyel *Lute Songs 1606* The Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley 56' 21"  
Decca *Eloquence 480 1803*

Danyel is the most important composer of lute songs after Dowland, despite only producing one book of twenty songs. Thomas Tomkins dedicated the two parts of one of his madrigals to "Doctor Douland" and "Master Iohn Daniell" respectively, which suggests that in the 1620s he was regarded as Dowland's equal in some quarters.

Although still relatively little known beyond the 'lute song community', these are undoubtedly some of the very finest examples of the genre, and this re-issue from 1981 is most welcome. In 1606 Danyel was household musician to Sir William Grene's family at Great Milton in Oxfordshire, and the book's dedicatee, Mistress Anne Grene was the daughter of the family, and his lute pupil. Prior to the original LP of this disc, re-issued here on CD for the first time, there had been a more than passable LP recording by Martin Cole's London Music Players in 1979, and in 1994 Hyperion issued a disc claiming to contain 'The Complete Songs and Lute Music' (not quite complete, in fact – some stanzas of songs were omitted to keep the disc under 80 minutes!, featuring Nigel Short and lutenist David Miller. Both Cole and Miller's albums featured falsettists in many of the songs, which is very unlikely to be how these amazing songs were originally conceived, but because Rooley insists that the songbook represents a 'song story' and 'follow(s) a delightful sequence of masculine advance and feminine rebuttal', he opts for the much more sensible solution of having each song sung, in the published sequence, by soprano (Emma Kirkby) or tenor (Martin Hill).

For all the several punning references to Anne Grene's name in the songbook, I have always found it difficult to accept completely Rooley's idea that the songs form a 'carefully constructed conceit'. In any case, the image of the 42-year old Danyel playfully serenading his 16-year old lute pupil, Mistress Anne Grene in 'an elaborate Jacobean game', and 'playing the role of musical Apollo' to her 'Daphne', as Rooley puts it, seems to me to be a bit creepy, and considering Danyel's status as an employee of the family, 'going a bit far', as we might say nowadays. Nevertheless, the book does contain two remarkable miniature cycles – groups of three related songs – one of them a funeral elegy for the husband of the still-unknown 'Mrs. M.E.', the other containing the most chromatic songs ever set to the lute, though neither of these seem to have any direct connection to the Grene's.

Even though modern styles of singing lute songs may have moved on dramatically from Rooley's 1970s 'whole-songbooks-sung-relatively-plain-as-library-recordings' approach towards a much more expressive response to the

texts (as heard in Emma Kirkby's more recent recordings with Jakob Lindberg), it is still difficult to imagine these songs performed much better than they are here – the divine Emma, and the excellent Martyn Hill, both with diction so immaculate that it stands as an object lesson in singing lute songs, even after nearly thirty years. The lessons learned from the Consort's Complete Dowland project (which this issue closely followed) show that they were, even then, beginning to work towards a more expressive style. Rooley comments in his update to the booklet notes that he hopes that the reissue will find new Danyel converts. Hear hear!

In the era BK (Before Kirkby), we had become used to years of LP recordings and radio programmes where almost everything was performed by the same post-war repertory company of 1970s operatic British Soloists who, basically, sang, broadcast and recorded everything for us – all the 'early music', oratorios, the lieder, the opera – all the same folk, with sometimes more than a hint of Palm Court G&S complete with aspidistra. A glance at the line-up of soloists engaged for Gardiner's 1974 Monteverdi Vespers will confirm this. That's who he engaged for the records, 'cos that's who there were. Then, mercifully, came a younger generation of performers, and the difference was astonishing. Lighter, more agile performances like a breath of fresh air, involving a completely different mindset. How we rejoiced.

Amorous Dialogues Emma Kirkby, Martyn Hill ST, The Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley 51' 54"  
Decca *Eloquence 480 414 4*

Duets by Bartlet, Ferrabosco, Morley, Ford, Henry Lawes, Gagliano, D'India, Ferrari, Fontei and Monteverdi

It may come as a surprise to younger musicians and readers to learn that, back in the Stone Age of the later 1970s, those of us music students who bought the original LP issue of *Amorous Dialogues*, along with the 'Complete Dowland' discs, Hogwood's AAM Arne, and so many of the other wonderful things that were emerging, monthly, on the L'Oiseau Lyre label with its distinctive cover art, that we were, even then, very well aware that we were fortunate to be living in something of a 'golden age' for good recordings of hitherto unexplored repertoire. At this time, Messrs, Rooley, Kirkby and co. were almost the sole purveyors of such richness as we have on this disc. Who else was recording duets for tenor and soprano of English 17<sup>th</sup> century composers and contrasting them with their Italian contemporaries on side 2 of the same LP? Nobody else, that's who! "...happy time / It was indeed for all of us – for me / It was a time of rapture!" as the man said.

All the above is what listening to this disc suggested to

me as I heard it again for the first time in many years. We have come so far in such a relatively short time, and we must not forget what has been achieved – and the pioneers who worked so hard, often in the face of extreme prejudicial reaction from the more conservative members of the listening community, to help create the ‘early musical world’ that we inhabit today.

This is a wonderful disc by any standards, and I could have bored you by just describing the lovely music, but you really don’t need me to tell you to go out and get it, do you? It is unalloyed joy, so you should.

*Ravish’d with Sacred Extasies: Devotional Songs by Dowland, Campion, Humfrey and Purcell* Elin Manahan Thomas S, David Miller lute and theorbo 70’ 41”  
Coro COR 16081

This is a lovely disc. A program of ‘devotional’ songs drawn from opposing ends of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it cleverly compares and contrasts some of the religious texts set as lute songs of Dowland with the declamatory songs of Purcell’s time. Dowland’s sequence of three songs beginning with ‘Thou mightie God that rightest every wrong’ must originally have been intended to be performed in its four part setting, and I definitely prefer the richness of the ‘full’ version; but Thomas and Miller here present a more than compelling argument for the simpler solo voice and lute alternative.

Elin Manahan Thomas’ voice is an ideal avatar for these smaller scale, non-chapel works, though I welcomed the breaks from so much vocal music in similar keys afforded by David Miller’s interspersed lute solos, especially those that were new to me, by John Lawrence (?-1635).

I was equally impressed by the excellent booklet notes by Moira Allum. They are a model of how to write not just clearly and concisely, but also *interestingly* about a subject that few of us as listeners or performers actually know that much about nowadays – the religious context to the songs: “these domestic, devotional pieces tend to confuse the modern mind.” Citizens of a post religious state, we have lost the blueprint for how to live and breathe in an omnipresent religious aura”. The songs that have been chosen, Allum writes, “range from the doctrinally eloquent to the theologically unsteady” and “from the spare and restrained (late Dowland) to the opulent and overblown” (Purcell’s BVX), but all in all, it’s a well-balanced selection, and very welcome.

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## MONTEVERDI & SCHÜTZ

The Orlando Chamber Choir along with the English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble and the Monteverdi String Band offered a “Grand Vespers For Doge and Duke” at St Jame’s, Piccadilly (Nov 12). The two headline composers were Monteverdi and Schütz, each showcased in large works for the entire ensemble as well as in more intimate settings. These were complemented by instrumental pieces by Giovanni Gabrieli, Giovanni Picchi, Biagio Marini and Johann Vierdanck. For the larger items, the ensemble was arranged so that, as suggested by Schütz himself, the instruments doubling and accompanying the two choirs were placed diagonally opposite, and I found myself leaning back to hear the resultant sound bounce off the roof – it was generally very satisfying. The choir, though large, came across rather well, especially in the chromatic and semiquaver passages of Monteverdi’s *Dixit Dominus II* (1641). There were also fine contributions from four young soloists – sopranos Rebecca-Jane Lea and Marie-Claire Lindsay, and tenors Finn Downie Dear and Sam Dressel; the boys were better at engaging with one another in their duets. Much as I love the two Monteverdi duets the girls sang, Schütz’s *Anima mea liquefacta est* with mute cornetts stole the show for me. There is nothing quite like a band of two fiddles, cornetti and brass to rouse the spirit, and in what seems to be a sea of Monteverdi Vespers, James Weeks, the director of an enjoyable evening’s music, made a bold – and I would say successful – choice in offering contrasts with the music in that great ‘work’ (it is now, whatever the origins of its constituent items!) BC

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Phelipe de los Rios *Sonate in C-dur für Viola und bc.* (1778). *Erstdruck* herausgegeben von Michael und Dorothea Jappe. Cornetto (CP998), 2010. 12pp + 2 parts

This is a potentially useful piece for viola and cello. The original instrumental names *Viola sola y Baxo* would seem not to imply keyboard, though the title page continues *para la oposicion de dtro Instrum<sup>to</sup>* (meaning?) and not only are there no figures, but the music doesn’t seem to need a keyboard. It’s certainly a useful piece, in three movements. And looks worth playing (and even performing).

*The Balcarres Lute Book...* Edited by Matthew Spring (The Music of Scotland 02) The Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, 2010. 2 vols, £95.00  
Vol. 1 Introduction and Facsimile xxxii + 271pp  
Vol. 2 Transcription and Commentary x + 302pp

There is one substantial pair of volumes that should have been reviewed here. But when putting the issue together, I found that I had only sketched out the review, with various question to answer and stopping rather than ending. So I will leave it for the next issue, along with two volumes of Breitkopf’s new edition of Bach’s organ music.

## CD REVIEWS

## MEDIEVAL

*Camino de Santiago, Villasirga, Montserrat Spielleyt*, Early Music Freiburg 65' 47"  
Christophorus CHR 77330 65' 47"

The scope of this is wider than one might expect. We don't reach medieval Spain until track 6 (of 13). Then follow one item from the Codex Calixtenus, two *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Alfonso X was linked with Villasirga), three from the *Llibre vermell*, closing with a 16th-century French song tracing the journey from Spain to Compostela. The performance style tends to blend such disparate music covering five centuries of pilgrimage, and as so often, the instrumental backing became wearisome: I suspect that we haven't yet worked out how to use the multifarious examples carved on the west end of Compostela Cathedral, and I wish I had some image of the functions and acoustics in which the very different styles of music were sung. The 3-part Encina *Romerico* (from c.1500) seems out of place here, though the closing item, the 16th-century *Quand nous partîmes de France*, sounds much earlier and fits. I'd like to hear Regina Kabis (the only singer) again, though (in impact at least) she couldn't compete with lady busker who thrilled me with her singing under an arch on the north side of Compostela cathedral a few years ago. Booklet notes are in German, English and French, but the texts are the original and German. CB

*Mia Yrmana Fremosa: Medieval woman's songs of love and pain* Triphonia 71' 19"  
Challenge Classics CC72385

It was a good idea for three female singers, Amanda Simmons, Gaby Bultmann and Leila Schoeneich, with 'a mutual passion for medieval music' to put together from MSS a programme of European 'woman's songs', generally unsophisticated music upon which they could improvise with intertwining voices and a range of instruments. The result is an entertaining and rather teasing depiction of girls' – and a nun's – activities, deserving a reprimand or penitence. The performers have enhanced the imagery with mimetic effects on the instruments: a drum to represent a mother's beating, a recorder chirping and a tinkle reminiscent of a musical-box for a coy adolescent

approach to God. At times we seem to be back in the world of nursery rhymes. The dramatic rendering of *Carmina Burana*, however, does not belong in the nursery.

Most of the instruments blended subtly in pre-orchestral felicity. It was good to see acknowledgement of makers from Germany, Ukraine, Egypt and Mexico, and even the Atlantic Ocean gained credit for making the scallop shells. My view is that the singers could experiment with different singing styles, for instance for Sephardic ballads, and that they might give further thought to voice production to achieve, if they like, a peasant-like quality without sliding out of tune or sounding over-strident. The experiments with harmony of various kinds were pleasing to the ear. Diana Maynard

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Josquin *Missa Pange lingua* Kammerchor Josquin des Prés, Ludwig Böhme 62' 07"  
Carus 83.345  
+ *Ave nobilissima creatura, Ave virgo sanctissima, O virgo virginum, Sit nomen Domini, Tu solus qui facis mirabilia*

*I began writing about this, but only at the editing stage did I realise that I had stopped mid-sentence, so the review is postponed till the next issue.* CB

*The Spirits of England and France 5 Missa Veterem hominem and other 15th-century English music* Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 65' 23"  
Hyperion Helios CDH55285  
Music anonymous except Dunstable: *Beata mater*

This re-release from Hyperion had been destined for D. James Ross, but I managed to leave it in my own CD player (I couldn't resist reminiscing about the Gothic Voices I remembered from my early days of exploring this repertoire) and just sending him the box. So apologies to anyone who would rather read James's review – there just wasn't time to send the disc and include it in this edition. There are still astonishingly few groups working on this music (and when you listen to this beautiful recording, you can only but wonder why?), though I wonder how many of them can compare with the purity and yet warm-hearted devotion that Gothic Voices bring to their renditions. This is not an academic

exercise, it very much has the air of musicians at worship – that might seem a strange thing for a self-confessed atheist to write, but it is true that I find the singing extremely moving. For that reason alone, I warmly recommend this recording to all our readers – the beautiful music is, in some ways, a bonus! BC

16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Clemens non papa Missa pro defunctis and penitential motets* The Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice 75' 52"  
Hyperion CDA67848

Stephen Rice's Brabant Ensemble has produced a series of very valuable recordings of hitherto neglected Renaissance masters which has filled several gaps in our understanding of the music of the period. It is remarkable that this CD of music by the prominent master Clemens includes a large number of first recordings (despite the CMM edition of his works being completed 35 years ago) and it dawns on me that this is a composer more often talked about than performed. Rice's booklet note, which includes the latest theory on the composer's idiosyncratic name, expresses surprise that such powerfully melody-led writing has not proved more popular in modern times, and indeed this is something of a puzzle. However, the present CD admirably addresses the gap in the market with highly expressive performances of a beautiful requiem and a series of exquisitely crafted motets, which illustrate powerfully Clemens' great gift for both melody and harmonic adventurousness and intensity of expression. This indeed is music which occupied centre stage in the Renaissance and belongs there in our own time. D. James Ross

Hassler *Sacred and Secular Music* Currende, Erik van Nevel 142' 25" (2 CDs)  
Etcetera KTC 1409 (2 CDs)

As chance would have it, just before this item arrived in my in-tray I had been listening to the excellent Weser Renaissance CD of Hassler's Latin church music (cpo 999 723-2) and recalling memories of a 1971 LP of his polychoral music by the pioneering Collegium Aureum, which included a terrific eight-voice Hassler mass. This two-CD collection includes vernacular psalm settings, Latin motets,

secular madrigals and songs of all kinds as well as dances and intradas – indeed, with the exception of his masses, a very complete cross-section of his output. Currende has an admirable discography to its name and considerable experience at performing this sort of repertoire, and they sing and play with passion and expression. I found that the very resonant acoustic of the Klein Begijnhof in Ghent obscured the detail in some of the more animated sacred works and sounded even less appropriate for the secular CD; but this is a minor complaint in relation to the major achievement of these skilled musicians in bringing such a kaleidoscopic range of Hassler's works so compellingly to CD. *D. James Ross*

*I Mercanti di Venezia* Bande Montreal Baroque  
Atma Classique ACD2 2598  
A & G Bassano, S. Rossi

With the Shakespearian reference in the title, this recording concentrates on three Jewish Venetian composers Salamone Rossi and Giovanni and Augustine Bassano – the last an English import. With so many recordings of the familiar pieces available, the ears search for the new idea. And here there are distinctive approaches. In particular, the division pieces work to transmit the mood of the original madrigals through the medium – with a reflective and interestingly passive bass viol for *Anchor che col partire*, and *Ung very gay bergier* on the cornett, sandwiched by the madrigals as instrumental consorts, and *Frais et galliard* is suitably ravished by a recorder. The mood-changes between the Rossi sonatas are well pointed, and the heterogenous instrumental mix casts a new light on the dialogues. The CD also contains three of the rarely recorded Ricercata by G. Bassano. These pieces are highly abstract and hard to bring off, which is no doubt the reason for performers' caution; they are in such marked contrast to the highly directional compositions of the early baroque which constitute the rest of this disc. They are very well rendered here – one each on treble viol, recorder and violin. Thoughtfully fantastical and virtuosic by turns, they sit as neatly spaced foils in the well proportioned programme. The viol has the edge for me in that the performance plays with the overlaying of the patterns, having the bravery to remain in the abstract and being unequivocal about the essence of these pieces. Very fine playing throughout. *Stephen Cassidy*

*Vivat Leo! Music for a Medici Pope*  
Cappella Prastensis, Joshua Rifkin  
Challenge Classics CC72366  
de la Fage, Festa, Josquin, Mouton, de Silva, Willaert

Following the huge achievement of their CD/DVD of Obrecht's *Missa de Sancto Donationa* (Fineline fl72414), the latest CD of the versatile and enterprising Cappella Prastensis is a sequence of strong performances of very fine polyphony associated with Giovanni de' Medici, aka Pope Leo X. A true son of this affluent and extrovert family, Leo employed the considerable funds at his disposal in an orgy of indulgence, cultural and otherwise, ironically culminating in having to raise funds by the introduction of indulgences, thereby in part triggering the Reformation. It is interesting to find Cappella Prastensis joined for this project by Joshua Rifkin in the role of editor and presumably director. The superlative quality of the music is confidently explored by the ensemble, singing with technical assurance and superb musicality, and in motets such as Mouton's magnificent eight-part canonic *Nesciens mater* sounding better than I have ever heard them before. *D. James Ross*

*O Virgo Benedicta: Music of Marian Devotion from Spain's Century of Gold*  
The Marian Consort 75' 10"  
Delphian DCD34086

Ceballes *O virgo benedicta*; Esquivel *Missa Ave virgo sanctissima* (Gloria, Credo) Guerrero *Ave virgo sanctissima*, Maria Magdalena, *Missa Sancta et immaculata* (Agnus), *Pastores loquebantur*; Lobo *Ave regina caelorum*, *Missa Maria Magdalene* (Kyrie, Sanctus); Navarro *Regina caeli*; Vivanco *Magnificat I toni*; *O sacrum convivium*

This is an impressive CD by a newish ensemble, founded at Oxford in 2007, directed by the alto Rory McCleery. It is an interesting anthology of two generations of Spanish composers. Ceballes, Guerrero and Navarro were born around 1530, Esquivel, Lobo and Vivanco 20-30 years later, but overlapping with their seniors. It would be a good exercise to ask students to listen to the disc without knowing the composers and guess which pieces were by the earlier group, which by the later. There's a theological curiosity (which the excellent note-writer Bruno Turner tactfully ignores): what is Maria Magdalene doing here? A more sensational title might have been: 'The two Marias: Music for the virgin and the harlot'.

I'm a little disappointed that there is nothing very new in the group's style – not that other recent ensembles show

much originality either. I would guess that they sing from modern editions, since long notes that cross the tactus sound different from those beginning on the 'beat'. There's a bit too much vibrato, which is one reason why the chords aren't as precise as they could be. And I'm worried about the range of voices chosen for the ensemble. If I manage to unpack the music I have in store in the next month or two, I'll check with such scores as I have; my guess is that the music is sung too high. Assuming that low clefs correspond roughly to A=440, the alto should be singing the C1 part (or transposed G2 clef if the bass has C4 or F3) and a line-up of SSATBarB should be replaced by AATBarBarB (I'm thinking in general terms of late renaissance polyphony). Except in certain circumstances (English music for trebles, for instance), boys evidently were not trained to sing high like modern cathedral choristers. The standard overall compass is under three octaves, and it is more plausible that there were no trebles than no basses. (The practice in the Eton Choirbook of listing the total range of each piece is a useful model.) Small ensembles with a wide repertoire need a pool of singers, not one-size-fits-all. I'm exercising a hobby-horse, which I wouldn't do if the disc had more recent music written for proper sopranos. But there's a head-in-sands attitude among so many vocal ensembles which a specialist magazine like this should notice, even if no-one else does. *CB*

*Renaissance am Rhein: Motetten, Lieder und Chansons des 16. Jahrhunderts* Singer Pur 66' 39"

Oehms Classics OC 820

Music by de Castro, de Cleve, Hagius, di Lasso, de Latre, Mangon, Peudargent, Pevernage, Zangius & anon.

It would perhaps be surprising if a region as opulent and with so many major religious establishments as the Renaissance Rhineland didn't boast a rich musical tradition. But it is one which has rarely been explored, and the present CD by Singer Pur includes a large number of modern firsts. The group spreads its net wide, including works by composers working outwith the area whose works are recorded in local choirbooks. A key figure in this respect is Johannes Mangon, represented on the CD by a competent setting of *In craticula te Deum non negavi*, and who compiled an eclectic choirbook for use in Aachen which includes a wealth of European big names from the period.

More intriguing, however, are the very fine second rankers such as Konrad Hagius, Nicolaus Zangius, Andreas Pevernage and Martin Peudargent, the last of whom is represented by a particularly powerful motet. As usual with Singer Pur you can forget about intonation, phrasing and musicality, all of which are consistently flawless, and relax into the music itself, repertoire which is well worth wider attention. *D. James Ross*

### 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Charpentier *Actéon* H 481, *Orphée descendant aux enfers* H471, *La pierre philosophale* H501 12 soloists, Boston Early Music Festival Vocal & Chamber Ensembles, Paul O'Dette & Stephen Stubbs 66' 19" cpo 777 613-2

The series of cpo recordings of Boston productions here gains another distinguished addition. *Actéon* was performed in November 2008 and recorded in September 2009 and certainly sounds as if it knows where it is going. The short scenes flow into each other convincingly and there is a real sense of 'one-ness' about the whole thing. I do wish, however, that someone would really think about the whole issue of Charpentier's flûtes. Were they really soprano recorders playing at four foot pitch? Should they not be an appropriate size of recorder in unison with the violins? This will often mean voice flutes. The instruments exist. They must have been used for something. I also question the addition of percussion to what is essentially chamber music. But it is all done very tastefully. Charpentier's *Orphée* cantata has been recorded by Paul Agnew, but this new performance has nothing to fear from even that competition. *La Pierre Philosophale* is new to me. It is a brief *divertissement* from a play by Corneille, here used effectively to bring an otherwise tragedy-heavy programme to a more light-hearted conclusion.

*David Hansell*

Biber *Rosenkranzsonaten* Daniel Sepec *vl*, Hille Perl *gamba*, Lee Santana *archlute & theorbo*, Michael Behringer *hpscd & org* 124' 36" (2 CDs) Coviello Classics COV 21008

This recording of Biber's *Mystery Sonatas* (as they're possibly best known in English) is going straight on to my shelf along with such benchmark recordings as John Holloway's and Walter Reiter's. In some ways, it is a cross between the two.

I loved John's sense of discovery – and his sparkling virtuosity. Walter seemed to take a more awed approach – there is no over-the-top display, the music speaks as eloquently for itself as we all know it does, and the focus on beautiful sound paid rich dividends. Sepec is richly supported by his continuo trio, and gives marvellous accounts of this wonderful cycle. He has been extra-ordinarily lucky in being able to use three Stainer violins, the very type we know Biber advocated and played. Only once was a little too much pressure applied to a mistuned string for my liking – an amazing achievement. Thoroughly recommended. *BC*

Biber & Biber: *Sonatas for trumpets, strings and continuo* Gabriele Cassone, Roberto Falcone, Antonio Frigé, Ensemble "Pian & Forte" 68' 47" Dynamic DM8001

C. H. Biber 3 sonatas for tpt, str, bc; 2 sonatas for 4 tpt, str, bc; sonata for clarinet [sic], 4 tpt, str, bc. H. I. F. Biber Sonatas IV, VII 25, *Sonata rappresentativa*, Partia V

I may have been a fan of Biber's music for as long as I can remember, but I don't think I've consciously heard any of his son's music. What a difference a generation makes! I'm not too sure I shall go looking for more recordings of Carl Heinrich's music, although it is pleasant enough and one can imagine it serving what the booklet aptly describes as its "pompous and magnificent" function. For me, his father's far more profound, not to say richly varied, output will remain a major focus. I was disappointed that Ensemble "Pian & Forte" opted to play the C minor Partia on violins rather than violas d'amore – the other-worldliness is an essential part of the music. That said, these Italians are very fine Biber performers – as, of course, their forefathers must have been! *BC*

Antonio Cifra *The Loreto Vespers* (1629) Ensemble Officium, Instrumenta Musica, Wilfried Rombach 67' 03" Christophorus CHR 77321

This engaging CD answers several questions. The first is what was going on in Rome while Venice was enjoying a golden age of polychoral music? The second what did the music of one of the key figures in Rome, Antonio Cifra, sound like and how did it rate in comparison with the music of Monteverdi?

Cifra had begun the 17th century writing music in the imitative style of Palestrina, but in a world of quickly

changing fashions he quickly found himself required to write in the new concertato manner. I have seen his mature efforts in this new style described as 'somewhat unimaginative'. This is where the present CD begins to provide some rather unexpected answers. On the evidence of the present Vespers music, Cifra's considered attempt at concertato writing is actually very impressive, certainly comparable with the great Gabrieli and Monteverdi, suggesting that, perhaps unsurprisingly, the Roman scene was every bit as lively as the Venetian at this time. Rombach's forces produce a suitably sonorous timbre to allow us to enjoy Cifra's music to full advantage, and they also articulate the more florid *passaggi* to great effect. Rombach has done a considerable service in presenting this neglected music in a liturgical context, allowing musical virtues to emerge which clearly are not evident on paper, and restoring the reputation of a neglected but clearly highly skilled Roman composer.

*D. James Ross*

Danyel Lute Songs 1606 The Consort of Musick, Anthony Rooley 56' 21" Decca Eloquence 480 1803 *see p. 18*

Matheo Romero *Romero florido* Cappella Mediterranea, Ensemble Clematis, Leonardo Garcia Alarcon 61' 04" Ricercar RIC 308

The last Fleming to direct the musicians of the Spanish Court, it is clear from this scintillating CD of Matheo Romero's secular music the extent to which he 'went native'. Dynamic and fantastically idiomatic renditions of his songs and consort music by the voices of the Cappella Mediterranea, superbly supported by the Ensemble Clematis, make clear that this was a genuinely versatile talent as much at home in a fiery *cancion* or a passionate *romanze* as in a pious motet. It is difficult to define what makes Spanish music sound idiomatic, but it is a quality which Jordi Savall first brought to the treasures of the Spanish renaissance, and we find it in abundance here in these performances, by turns beguiling and sultry, free but rhythmically infectious and above all hugely engaging. Highly recommended. *D. James Ross*

Amorous Dialogues Emma Kirkby, Martyn Hill, The Consort of Musick, Anthony Rooley 53' 54" Decca Eloquence 480 4144 *see p. 18*

*Con Chitarrone Italian sonatas from early renaissance to baroque* Leupold Trio

Challenge Classics CC72369 74' 35"

Bertali, Castello, Cima, Corelli, Dowland, Frescobaldi, D. Gabrielli, Howet, B. Marini, Rosenmüller & Vivaldi

This disc would make a fabulous concert. There are pieces for solo chitarrone, violin or cello with chitarrone, and violin and cello with chitarrone, ranging from the (to me) little-known Gregory Howet to Vivaldi, all played with fabulous style and verve. There is a real air of performing for an audience, which is not all that common in the recorded music world. Some of the statements in the booklet note could have done with questioning by a musicologist, and I must also object to the substitution of cello for gamba in a sonata by Bertali – Wouter Mijnders can obviously get his hands around the high notes with perfect ease, but the *timbre* is wrong, and the balance between the two instruments could never be right. All the performers enjoy their ornamentation, and this underlines what I was saying about communicating with the listener in a direct way. I especially enjoyed Vivaldi's cello sonata, RV44 with just chitarrone for continuo – in that respect, the booklet is definitely accurate: why *do* harpsichordists have it their own way all the time? BC

*Corelli's Legacy* Musica Antiqua Roma, Riccardo Minasi 57' 45"

passacaille 962

Carbonelli op 1/2 Castrucci op 1/4, Corelli op 5/9, Locatelli op 8/10, Montanari Giga in g, Mossi op 1/5, Visconti op 2/5

Three of these works are recorded here for the first time (the Carbonelli, Mossi, Castrucci + the Montanari Giga), and the other works can surely not have had many previous outings (except the Corelli, of course). Riccardo Minasi is a fine violinist, agile in the quicker movements, lyrical in the more reserved ones. He never pushes his instrument – or his interpretation and ornamentation – too far. His continuo line-up is cello, keyboard and sometimes triple harp. I realise that this seems to be the "big new idea" in baroque accompaniment, and I'm sure there is a body of evidence to support it, but sometimes I find the resonance of the harp a little too much – not to criticise Margret Köll, who is clearly a virtuoso performer; but I found some of her melodies while Minasi was doing lots of across-the-strings bowing in the Carbonelli a little distracting. This is

definitely an important disc, and anyone interested in the repertoire should clearly have it in their library. BC

*Dancing in the Isles: Baroque and Tradition Music from England, Scotland and Ireland* Musica Pacifica (Judith Linsenberg *rec & whistle* Elizabeth Blumenstock & Robert Mealy *bar violin* David Morris *bar cello & gamba* Charles Sherman *hpscd* Charles Weaver *theorbo & bar guitar* Peter Maund *percussion*) 74' 58"

Solimar 101 / CD Baby 385066

Musica Pacifica is based in California (though at least one of the players lives on the east coast) but this recording is a real treat for anyone who likes baroque dance music and arrangements of traditional folk music from the British Isles. From England we have a set of country dances, music from the court masque, Locke's Suite no. 4 in C, Purcell's *Three Parts upon a Ground* (perhaps a bit out of place in this context) and a set of Ayres in G by the Italian immigrant Matteis. From Ireland there are just five traditional tunes, but Scotland is well represented by another traditional group, James Oswald's *Sonata on Scots Tunes* and two pieces by Italians working in London, more Ayres by Nicola Matteis and the *Scozzeze* movement from Veracini's Sonata in A, op 2/9. These are sparkling performances, some sure to set your feet tapping and others expressing a delicate melancholy; despite the apparent editing hiccup in one of the tracks, this is a recording I can warmly recommend. Victoria Helby

*Frustratingly, I was within a hundred yards of a performance of this programme in Berkeley in June, but missed it.* CB

*Dowland's Delight. Harp music from the renaissance and the baroque.* Tom Daun 54' 36"

Raumklang RK 3006

Very little music for the harp survives from the renaissance and baroque periods, so Tom Daun has turned to the large repertory of lute music for his CD anthology. He includes pieces from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, 11 well-known pieces by John Dowland, and baroque music from Silvius Leopold Weiss (*Fantasie & Fuge* in D minor), Esaias Reusner (*Paduana* and *Sonatina*), and J. S. Bach. The Bach pieces are played convincingly, with a thoughtful *Allemande*, an unhurried *Sarabande*, and a lively *Gavotte en rondeau*.

It is unfortunate that Daun uses rubato excessively in *Lacrimae* and *Semper Dowland*.

These pieces are pavans, and require a slow, steady rhythm to maintain their dignity and sense of sorrow. Playing with expression does not mean that you have to play out of time, and I feel uncomfortable when the beat is tossed around jerkily. Lady Hunsdon has a thumpy character to her *Puffe*, and if there are two identical chords in the final bar of a section, the second is sometimes ponderously louder. Mrs Winter, on the other hand, bounces along energetically with her *Jump*, Lord Willoughby is welcomed home with spirit to celebrate his triumph in the Low Countries, and Tarleton is merry with his *Jig and Riserrectione*.

Daun uses two harps for this recording: for some of the early pieces, a small diatonic Gothic harp; and for most tracks, a double harp (*arpa doppia*) made by André Schubert, which is fully chromatic. Quite charming is the sound of the little Gothic harp, complete with its buzzy brays. Daun plays this harp for Judenkünig's *Rossina*, for three idiosyncratic pieces by Stefan Craus (c.1540), and to good effect in Melchior Neusidler's *Fuggerin Tanz* and Hans Neusidler's evergreen *Wascha mesa*. Stewart McCoy

*Les Escapades du Roi Plaisirs & intrigues à la cour de Versailles* Monika Mauch, Viol-consort "Les Escapades" 73' 55"

Christophorus CHR 77338

L'Affilard, Charpentier, F Couperin, Forqueray, de Lalande, Lully, Marais, Montéclair, L. Rossi, de Visée

I like both the concept and execution of this recital and I am guessing that with a reader for the period quotes that illustrate the framing narrative it makes a terrific festival programme. The conceit is that 'a young provincial beauty comes to the court, is presented to the King and becomes his favourite, falls into disgrace through the intrigues of her rivals, but finally retrieves her honour'. Must have been an almost daily occurrence at some Baroque courts! Here we are at Versailles, so the story is told and reflected in music by the usual suspects – Charpentier, Couperin, Lully, Marais *etc* – with a pleasing variety of genres and sonorities. These include the heady sound of three bass viols with theorbo. Three relatively lengthy works bring substance to the sequence (Couperin's *La Sultane*, Charpentier's *Concert... de violes* and a Montéclair cantata). The notes say nothing about the music, but this isn't really that kind of disc. I loved it.

David Hansell

*Musical London c. 1700 from Purcell to Handel* Philippa Hyde sop, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman 75' 47"  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0776  
Courteville, Croft, Draghi, Handel, Haym, Matteis, Pepusch, Purcell & Weldon

This is a beautifully planned and performed recital that deserves a more enticing title. There is one piece of Purcell (*The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation*) and one of, perhaps, Handel (*Venus and Adonis*) but for the rest we are offered an illuminating tour of what can seem the 15 year black hole between them. Few people know this territory as well as Peter Holman, and here he and his colleagues offer seven first recordings, many musical gems and lots of pure pleasure. The ensemble playing is never less than superb. Philippa Hyde sings with a full sound, though not in a way that conflicts with the clean instrumental timbres. She certainly has the agility required by several of the songs and the sensitivity to do one of the best ends to the BVE that I have heard. As a bonus, the recorded sound also struck me as very good. So don't be put off by the title. There are some real gems here, including a Chandos anthem that isn't by Handel.

David Hansell

*ombra e luce: Modena 1665* Georg Kallweit vln, Björn Colell theorbo/guitar 62' 42"  
Raumklang RK2905  
G. M. Bononcini, Cazzati, Colombi, Corelli, Ferrari, Roncalli, Uccellini & Vitali

This is a thoroughly enjoyable disc. I knew very little of the music (which is no bad thing!) and was repeatedly obliged to re-listen to various of the works. It is a brave decision to fill a whole CD with just violin and plucker, but there is plenty of variety in the styles of the music to ward off any doubts about monotony of sound, and the use of theorbo and guitar means some changes of timbre. Both performers are masters of their instruments, and very clearly at home in repertoire somehow related to the d'Este court at Modena that stretches over almost a century. Some of the optional Violin 2 parts for the Uccellini are carried by the guitar (as well as providing the basso continuo, of course), some works are accompanied from *alfabetti*, and others have bass lines improvised. If you like pleasant surprises, this disc could well be for you.

BC

*Ravish'd with Sacred Extasies* Elin Manahan Thomas S, David Miller lute 70' 41"  
Coro COR16081 see p. 18

*Salsa Baroque: Music of Latin America and Spain of the 17th and 18th Century* Ensemble Caprice 61'15"  
Analekta AN 2 9957  
de Araujo, de Bailly, Fernandes, de Murcia, de Salazar, de Zéspedes, Zipoli & anon.

Ensemble Caprice is a group of five singers, recorders, flutes, cornetto, strings, continuo and percussion, based in Montreal. The size of the group gives them the opportunity to present a varied programme of vocal and instrumental music in various combinations, mainly by Latin American composers such as Gaspar Fernandez, Juan de Araujo and Domenico Zipoli. We are familiar with the style from recordings by Jeffrey Skidmore, Jordi Savall and others, and the performances are good individually, with some lovely singing. It's hard to see the logic behind the choice of music, which is a mixture (salsa?) of mainly religious music from South America interspersed with arrangements of anonymous pieces from Antonio Martin y Coll's collection of Spanish keyboard pieces, *Flores de Música*. This doesn't detract from the overall quality of the performances but it would certainly have been helpful to have had the words of the vocal pieces.

Victoria Helby

*Terres d'Espagne: Musique d'Orgue dans Les Royaumes de Philippe IV* Damien Colcomb (1501/1974 organ, Lorrissen Gatinais, France)  
Hortus 081

With a history dating back to 1501, the swallow's nest organ at Lorrissen turns out to be an ideal vehicle to demonstrate the musical links between the various parts of Philip IV's vast European domains (the 'Spanish Territories' of the CD's title) during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, notably Spain, Portugal and Flanders and the composers Correa de Arauxo, Kerckhoven and Cornet. The one-manual organ has two divided reed stops and a treble cornet, all used to stunning effect in bringing out the treble and bass solos in works by all three composers – solos that are usually an elaboration of a polyphonic treble or bass voice. The meantone temperament of the organ makes an essential contribution to the tone colour of the music, notably in the purity of cadences. The extraordinary flights of fancy of Correa de Arauxo

form the musical highlights, to me at least, notably his *Tiento LIX de medio registro de tiple de Segundo tono*, with its characteristically lugubrious bass and seemingly anarchic treble solo, a melodic line that takes on a life of its own when the bass chords change, the resulting brief change in wind pressure sending an additional burst of wind into the treble pipes – one of the joys of organs with flexible winding. The sound of the action adds a delightful percussive contribution.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*von den letzten dingen* amarcord, cappella sagittariana dresden  
Raumklang Edition Apollon Rkap30107  
Otto, M. Praetorius, Rosenmüller, Scheidemann, Schein, Schütz & anon

This, quite simply, is a fabulous disc. The omens are not good – an hour of German funeral motets is hardly what one might choose to sit down and listen to of a dark winter's evening, but that is precisely what I have done several times over the past few weeks. Partly because the music itself is so wonderfully moving – there cannot have been a dry eye at many of the original obsequies – but, even more than that, for such beautiful music-making. The two headline groups are a male voice consort and an instrumental ensemble, but they are joined for this project by three sopranos and another tenor, and the blend they achieve is inspired. I rejoiced in finally hearing a delightful account of Rosenmüller's *Welt ade, ich bin dein müde* – which was good enough for J. S. Bach to lift straight into *Cantata 27* (reviewed below) unadulterated. The most moving work in the programme is Schein's *Threnus* – I defy anyone not to be affected by its rich harmonies and melancholic lines!

BC

#### LATE BAROQUE

Dr Thomas Arne & Friends *A Cheerful Collection: Songs and Sonatas from London's Pleasure Gardens* Julia Gooding S, Passacaglia (Oliver Webber vln, Annabel Knight rec/fl, Reiko Ichise gamba, Robin Bigwood hpscd)  
Barn Cottage Records bcro03  
www.barncottagerecords.co.uk

This is a pleasing way to remember Arne and his contemporaries. There haven't been so many commemorations of his birth in 1710 last year that the ear has wearied of him, and this is a welcome anthology. Arne's popularity over the

centuries has, apart from *Rule, Britannia*, been linked to Shakespeare: there are five of his Shakespeare songs here, delightfully sung by Julia Gooding and 'Thou soft flowing Avon' from Garrick's Ode. His other contribution is a small-scale version of the overture to *The Guardian Outwitted*. The scale here is rather smaller than the Pleasure Garden subtitle implies: think rather of an ample drawing room, perhaps with amateur performers (though I'm not implying that these are thus). It is good to hear a couple of Trio Sonatas, nos 2 & 6 from Arne's op. 3 set of, unusually, seven. Abel's Sonata in G requires a rarer skill. It's unlikely that such a gathering would normally have a gamba rather than a cello, but Reiko Ichise is utterly convincing. Scotland is represented by two of Geminiani's settings and the disc ends with three airs by Oswald, more convincingly Scottish than Peruvian despite their title. This isn't music for which to don one's serious symphonic listening hat; enjoy instead this less ambitious music delightfully sung and played. CB

**Bach Cantatas vol. 47: Cantatas from Leipzig 1726** Hana Blažiková, Robin Blaze, Satoshi Mikukoshi, Peter Kooij SATB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki BIS-SACD-1861 68' 27"

27 *Wer weiss, wie nahe mir mein Ende*, 36 *Schwingt Freudig euch empor*, 47 *Wer sich selbst erhöht*

Though advertised as 'Cantatas, Vol. 47: Leipzig, 1726', this CD includes *Schwingt Freudig euch empor*, BWV 36, which dates from 1731. A tenuous justification for its inclusion lies in the rough date of the earlier sacred version, 1726-30, but the definitive version of 1731, given here, is to a considerable extent radically different. Like certain other late cantatas, BWV 14, 80 and 140, it is a semi-chorale cantata, employing the same chorale in some but not all of the movements. Suzuki's tempi and articulation are pleasing throughout, and for once it is possible to concentrate entirely on the music, without irritating distractions.

The opening ritornello of *Wer sich selbst erhöht*, BWV 47, like its twin, the organ Prelude in C minor, BWV 546, often sounds somewhat heavy and monumental. Here it is played faster than usual and with a very light touch, and the result is truly compelling. The solo violin playing in the aria no. 2, as also in the penultimate movement of Cantata 36, is beyond reproach. The recitative no. 3 presents a Lutheran view of mankind to

which few would subscribe today: 'Man is excrement, stench, ashes, and earth'.

*Wer weiß, wie nahe mir mein Ende*, BWV 27, is among the most touching of Bach's later cantatas. The poignant opening movement, prompted by the text's reflections on death, recalls the sound world of the *St Matthew Passion*, whose first performance probably took place only about six months later. Versions of the aria no. 3 exist with harpsichord or organ obbligato, and Suzuki lets us hear both alternatives. The calm, sorrowful 'Gute Nacht', sung to the world by the bass in no. 5, contrasts sharply with the string *concitato* for the 'worldly tumult' in the same movement. For the finale Bach borrowed an antiquated five-part chorale setting by Rosenmüller [coincidentally on *von den letzten dingen* reviewed on p. 24].

All three of these cantatas are given immaculate performances. Above all, they sound light and airy – mercifully, the last vestiges of the old ponderous style of Bach performance have vanished. Richard Jones

**Bach Der Dritter Teil der Clavierübung in Naumburg** David Franke (1746 Hildebrandt organ, St Wenzel, Naumburg) 105' 05" Motette DCD MOT 13731 (2 CDs)

I first heard David Franke playing extracts from the *Clavierübung* while visiting Naumburg during the 2010 Leipzig BachFest, and was very impressed, both with Franke's playing and the newly restored organ. It is one of the most important 'Bach' organs around, with Bach having a detailed influence in the design and specification of the new instrument and later encouraging the Naumburg town council to employ his son-in-law, Altnickol, as Wenzelorganist.

One feature of the Baroque organ in general (but this one in particular) is the orchestral sound of many of the stops (as opposed to the more vocal sound of the Renaissance organ). This is most noticeable in the slightly stringy sound of the Principal stops, particularly when used in combination with other 8' stops as, for example, in the first Kyrie, *Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* and in the large scale *Dies sind die heiligen zehen Gebot*. The other feature of this organ is the distinct voicing and scaling (and their clear spatial separation) of the three manual divisions of the organ, with each rank and each pipe seeming to have its own individual voice. David Franke, recently appointed as Wenzelorganist (and, in 2008, the first ever German winner of the *Grand Prix d'Improvisation* at Chartres – a prize that

had not been awarded for the previous twelve years), brings out the best in this stunning organ in his choice of registrations and his excellent playing, with exemplary articulation and an inspired musical insight. I particularly liked the way he integrated the four Duets into the fabric of the greater work, not least by playing the first one on a full pleno registration. There are many recordings of the *Clavierübung* out there, but this is one of the finest I have heard.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Bach Oboe Concertos** Alexei Ogrintchouk oboe, Alina Ibragimova vln, Swedish Chamber Orchestra 64' 16"

BIS SACD 1769

Concerti in F & d for oboe, in c for oboe & violin, in A for oboe d'amore + Adagio from Easter Oratorio

What do you get if you bring together two outstanding young virtuosos, a first-rate chamber orchestra well versed in period style, and a top-notch recording company? Well, something like this present recital of concerti by Bach, for example. Ogrintchouk and Ibragimova are carving well-deserved reputations as the new kids on the block in modern instrument early music performances, and here they interweave their respective lines with an ear on the balance rather than drawing attention to themselves, and – although the instrumental colours just don't sound right to my fussy ears – the net result is a thoroughly enjoyable CD, oozing class from all concerned – never have the violinist's semiquaver sextuplets at the end of the double concerto sounded so easy! Thank goodness slow movements are no longer the 16-in-a-bar affair they used to be. I should make this required listening for anyone performing Bach on modern instruments. BC

**Bach Die Kunst der Fuge** Fabio Bonizzoni (with Mariko Uchimura) 63' 32" Glossa GCD P31510

As far as order and contents are concerned, this harpsichord rendering of *The Art of Fugue* follows the older version of the autograph manuscript (Berlin P200, c. 1742-6). The pieces are thus presented in the order

Contrapunctus 1, 3, 2, 5, 9, 10, 6, 7,

Octave Canon, Contrapunctus 8, 11,

Augmentation Canon, Contrapunctus 12, 13.

Pieces composed later for the definitive printed version (c. 1747-9) – Contrapunctus 4 and the Canons at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> – are

omitted. Bonizzoni is thus inconsistent in including the unfinished fugue, which was also composed during this later period.

As far as the text is concerned, however, Bonizzoni follows the revised version of the posthumous original edition (Leipzig, 1751), though again he is not entirely consistent: Contrapunctus 10 is alone given in the older autograph version. After scholars have taken care to distinguish between the two versions of Bach's late masterwork, it seems to me an unpardonable liberty to pick and choose between different aspects of the composer's revision. We end up here with neither of Bach's versions, but rather with a non-authentic version fabricated by Bonizzoni. The performances, on the other hand, are in themselves eminently satisfying. The fugues and canons are sparingly but tastefully ornamented, and the execution shows verve and grasp of detail. Both of the mirror fugues are played on two harpsichords. *Richard Jones*

J. S. Bach *The Brandenburg Concertos* La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 96' 51", 45' 20" (2 CDs)  
Accent ACC 24224

At last we have a recording of the Brandenburgs with one player to a part for all six concerti, not just for nos 3 and 6. What is more, Kuijken never uses a 16ft violone in any of the concertos, treating all the works as chamber music, an approach that I have felt for some while is altogether appropriate. The only concerto that might want a 16ft is, perhaps, No.1, the only one that specifies *violone grosso* rather than just *violone*. What is more, and perhaps more contentious, is the use of *viola da spalla* (shoulder cello) instead of the normal violoncello, a practice which Kuijken is using in his Bach cantata series. This further lightens the texture – no bad thing. Altogether, I like this recording. Cadences are unassuming, without any unnecessary ritenutos, and tempi are brisk throughout (some may think too brisk in some cases), though the thinner texture can take these tempi.

To deal with each concerto in numerical, rather than the order on the discs, in No. 1 the horns stand out with their hunting horn calls in the first movement, contrasting with the distinctly smaller tone of the violino piccolo. The minuets are taken at a brisk tempo, so that the trios and polonaise have (more or less at least), the same basic pulse. The minuets observe all repeats, with no

changes of instrumentation – and it works. No. 2 uses the true natural trumpet in F, an instrument without the 'fake' holes used by most players nowadays (see Mike Diprose's article in last October's EMR). Inevitably there is a bit of rough intonation, but at least it is an honest attempt to re-create Bach's intentions. No. 3 boasts three *viola da spalla*, with the violone part on a 'basse de violon', though it is not clear whether Kuijken uses the true French bass violin with its strings tuned down a tone, an 8' violone, or indeed a standard baroque cello for this part. Whatever is used, the four bass parts give a more transparent texture which allows for the very brisk tempo of the final movement. A short violin improvisation constitutes the two-chord *Adagio*. No. 4 has no way out ideas, such as using 8va G flageolets for the *fiauti d'echo* that Thurston Dart proposed in the 1960s, but has standard treble recorders. The slow movement, thankfully, does not over-emphasise the paired phrasing. Unfortunately the harpsichord (a Hemsch copy) in no. 5 is sometimes all but inaudible, in spite of the thinner texture, but No. 6 is wholly satisfying. Any review of the Brandenburgs cannot reflect anything other than a personal choice, but this one, with its stunning virtuosity, would be the one for me.

*Ian Graham-Jones*

J. L. Bach *Trauermusik* RIAS Kammerchor, Akademie für alte Musik Berlin, Hans-Christoph Rademann 77' 27"  
Harmonia mundi HMC 902080

Johann Ludwig Bach entered the Meiningen court in 1689, aged 22, rose to Cantor, and in 1711 was appointed Capellmeister, a post he held till his death in 1731. His employer, Duke Ernst Ludwig of Saxe-Meiningen, wrote two complete cycles of cantata librettos, one of which dates from 1704 and was reprinted several times. 18 cantatas from this cycle, set to music by J. L. Bach, were in 1726 performed in Leipzig by his distant cousin J. S. Bach, who during the same year himself set seven cantata texts from the same cycle.

Upon the death of his employer in 1724, J. L. Bach composed and performed this very fine and grandly conceived *Trauermusik* – in effect, an oratorio in three parts, comprising 27 movements in all. The libretto is built around a poem that the duke had written for his own funeral. J. L. Bach's music is scored for double choir throughout – not only two choirs but two orchestras, as in the St

*Matthew Passion*. The note of profound sorrow that we encounter there or in the roughly contemporaneous *Trauer-Ode*, BWV 198, is missing, no doubt partly due to the libretto, with its Lutheran view of life as 'harsh bondage' from which the duke has found welcome release through death. The plain homophony of the chorales is strikingly different from J. S. Bach's part-writing, but Johann Ludwig compensates by adding ornamental parts in the accompaniment. In general, the score is more operatic than the greater cousin's sacred vocal music, which is hardly surprising since the Meiningen Bach, unlike the Leipzig one, composed operas (all of which are unfortunately lost). All told, the music of this oratorio is most attractive – almost too much so, one would have thought, for a funeral; but, after all, thoughts of heaven here hold sway!

It is hard to imagine more persuasive advocacy of this remarkable score. There is often genuinely dramatic force in the bowing of the strings and in the enunciation of the choral singers; and all four vocal soloists prove more than equal to the many and varied demands of the arias and recitatives. I do wonder, however, whether the 'soloistic' ornamental writing in some of the choruses might have been better sung by solo singers. *Richard Jones*

Graupner *Ein Weihnachts Oratorium* Mannheimer Hofkapelle, Ex Tempore, Florian Heyerick 136' 11" (2 CDs)  
Ricercar RIC307

Well, you wait ages for a Graupner Christmas cantata and then 14 come along at once. To those reviewed by BC in the previous EMR (p36) here are another 9 which cover the Sundays of Advent and then feasts to the Epiphany and which range in date from 1714 to 1753. Thus this anthology is not an oratorio in any sense (and the notes make no claim that it is, though the packaging hints otherwise), but does have a certain integrity and is a good way of exploring Graupner's longevity and stylistic breadth. It's just a shame the cantatas are not quite in the correct liturgical order for reasons of disc length. I won't repeat the general points BC made last time. The main difference in approach between that release and this is that here there is a choir for the 'choruses', even though the director's own notes state that the Darmstadt court had no choir. This doesn't always work. In *Merk auf, mein Herz* the amiably buzzing chalumeaux would have a better

chance of making all their points against a solo consort. And, perhaps ironically for a collection of vocal music, it is for the innovative instrumental writing that I will most value this music. All of the singing is very good, without ever quite reaching the true heights, but when a composer writes you a gentle and really gorgeous duet with an accompaniment for 2 flutes, oboe, solo violin, pizzicato bass strings, 2 horns and 4 timpani 'very good' is more than good enough. I'll be fighting BC for the next Graupner cantata recording. There's no shortage of material to record: Graupner wrote 1418 cantatas!

David Hansell

**Handel *Alexander's Feast*** Sophie Bevan, Ed Lyon, William Berger STB, Ludus Baroque, Richard Neville-Towle 82' 26" Delphian DCD34094

Ludus Baroque have for over ten years presented major Baroque works for chorus and orchestra at Christmas and during the Edinburgh Festival in the marvellous Canongate church (sorry Kirk) with an excellent body of performers. This is the first to be recorded. There are two potential problems. The practical/financial one is that the length of the piece is awkward. It over-runs a CD by a couple of minutes, but at a RRP of £21.99, it isn't very good value if you expect to get a bit more music for your money and was a risk for a debut recording. On the other hand, it is good to be forced to take a break between acts;\* as I've written several times before, one advantage of the LP was the need to turn the disc over. The other issue is the tension of a performance. There are higher-powered versions of the work around. But they are not necessarily inferior to performers who are not excessively self-conscious and a conductor who knows what has to be done but doesn't force things. I enjoyed this more the second and even more the third time I played it. The world needs both styles: sometimes you want to sit on the edge of your seat; at other times you want to relax. This is primarily the latter. But I'm definitely not damning with faint praise: I hope you buy it and enjoy it. And no: although it has the same conductor, it's certainly not The Really Terrible Orchestra under another name!

CB

\* There's a problem in the running order as printed in the booklet. Disc/Act I appears to end with the air *The prince, unable to conceal his pain*, with no mention that it is followed by a repeat of the previous chorus: it is included in

the timing of the air – confusing to those who don't know the work. Both the Bärenreiter and Novello editions give the repeated chorus a separate number.

**Handel *Water Music*** les musiciens du louvre grenoble, Marc Minkowski 67'32" naïve V5234

+ *Overture to Rodrigo*

This period instrument *Water Music* is in the conventional score order of the three suites – here the Flute Suite forming an interlude between the two larger suites. It is very much an orchestral performance, boasting 8 1st violins and 3 double basses, with wind numbers to match. As such, it lacks the subtleties of phrasing and detail that some of the versions with smaller forces offer. The Overture is conventionally double dotted, with a fast tempo for the *allegro*. I felt that the large forces did at times tend to muddy the waters of the Thames, and that the very fast tempi of the Minuet, Bourrée and Hornpipe would require extremely athletic dancers, although the very steady Air ignored the spurious *Presto* marking. A surprising addition was a somewhat lengthy harpsichord cadenza at the end of the first number of the Trumpet Suite. The Overture and suite of dances, together with the Passacaglia that form the opening numbers of Handel's first Italian opera *Rodrigo* are the filler. There was some excellent solo wind playing in this recording, but it would not be one of the many available that I personally would choose.

Ian Graham-Jones

*News seems not to have reached Grenoble that the conventional order of three suites is a post-war invention.*

CB

**The Gentleman's Flute: Handel arias in 18th century arrangements for recorder and basso continuo** Stefan Temmingh rec and Ensemble 63'31" OEHMS Classics OC 772

The idea behind the selection of music on this recording is that of an 18th-century musical party where gentlemen would get together to play the latest arrangements of Handel operas as they were published soon after the operas themselves were staged. The South African recorder player Stefan Temmingh and six of his friends have obviously had fun putting together a varied programme of new arrangements of arias from *Rinaldo*, *Alcina*, *Saul* and other favourites, based on those of Walsh and other publishers and the original Handel scores. There is a lot

of elaborate ornamentation influenced by Babel's harpsichord transcriptions. Added interest is provided by the variety of continuo instruments – harpsichord, gamba, bassoon, harp, theorbo, lute and, rather surprisingly, psaltery. The latter is based on 18th-century Italian models and certainly adds a distinctive sound to some of the Rinaldo arias. There is some exciting fast playing but the slow movements can seem rather plodding in spite of the recorder ornamentation. If 18th century gentlemen's musical parties were like this then they must have been fun, but you may need a glass or two of wine to get into the mood. Victoria Helby

*There's a shortage of other Handel reviews this issue. Kati Hawkes has apologised: 'I've had no opportunity to play the CDs or write reviews as my mum's pup chewed through my computer cable and I'm waiting for a new one to arrive. My battery is limited... Grrr.' She has a disc of Handel arias featuring animals for the April issue, as well as a work which, on one of the few occasions I've met her, she was conducting.*

CB



**Rameau *Les Paladins*** Anna Virovanský Argie, Iulia Elena Surdu Nérine, Laimonas Pautienius Orcan, Anders J. Dahlin Atis/Démon, Adrian Sâmpetean Anselme, Thomas Michael Allen Manto, Fée/Paladin, Neue Düsseldorfer Hofmusik, Konrad Junghänel 121' 6" (2 CDs) Coviello Classics COV 21013

I suppose that at the age of 77 Rameau felt he could do just whatever he liked, whether that was score a few bars for horns and piccolos or write a *comédie lyrique* that, almost Figaro-like, challenged the theatrical and social conventions of the time. This performance has been compiled from a series of live recordings and there is some stage noise and the final applause, but none of this really

intrudes. Stylistically we are in very safe hands. As is often the case with J-PR, the orchestra has all the best moments including an overture that positively leaps into action and his usual exquisitely coloured dances. Among the singers, one soprano is better than the other at restraining the wobble, though both have basically clear and bright voices and Anders J Dahlin does a good job on the demanding role of Atis. I did not know *Les Paladins* but have enjoyed getting to know it through this recording. The music is fun. The supporting material is not quite so good. The essay, plot synopsis and artist information is multi-lingual but the libretto is only in not-very-difficult French. This may not be a bad thing as the translations leave much to be desired. 'Critics outline the vibrating tempi . . . of his interpretation.' Hmm. David Hansell

**Tartini *The Violin Concertos Vol. 16 "Felice età dell'oro"*** Giovanni & Federico Guglielmi + Carlo Lazari *vln*, *L'arte dell'arco* 135' 35" (2 CDs)

Di2, 29, 30, 38, 53, 66, 69, 81, 104, 108 & 119

You might think that, by Volume 16 of a series, you'd be scraping the bottom of the barrel, just playing anything to pad out the discs, but Tartini's output is clearly exceptional, for there is not one weak piece on either of these discs. Nor do the performers give any cause for disappointment: Carlo Lazari (soloist in 5 concertos), and Federico and Giovanni Guglielmi (3 each) and *L'arte dell'arco* are seasoned performers of this repertoire, and they seem to relish the challenges. The 11 concerti here are mostly of a lyrical vein, and virtuosic display is largely confined to playing in high positions – which all three of the soloists manage with seeming ease, without compromising the tone of their instruments, which of itself is a achievement. I'm not sure how many people will be assembling a complete collection of this grand and commendable series, but I can recommend these recordings and performances to any of our readers who are interested in this repertoire. BC

**Antonio Vivaldi *Concerti per il flauto traversier*** Alexis Kossenko *traverso* Arte Dei Suonatori 77'01"

Alpha 174

RV 427, 428 (excerpt), 429-30, 432, 434-36, 438, 440

I didn't have great expectations of an album of ten flute concerti by Vivaldi, but I could not have been more wrong.

The French flautist Alexis Kossenko and the Polish baroque orchestra Arte Dei Suonatori often work together and the result is a recording with a lovely warm sound and perfect balance between the soloist and orchestra. Kossenko demonstrates how Vivaldi's fast movements can be so much more than just a dazzling display of semiquavers, and his slow movements are particularly well-paced and beautifully ornamented. The concerti themselves are quite varied and Alexis Kossenko has written some really useful notes about them in the fifty-page booklet. There is also an article by historian Denis Grenier about the painting on the cover of the CD, *Il Concerto in Villa, 1750*, by the Venetian painter Antonio Visentini – interesting because it shows an outdoor performance by a group of instrumentalists, four of whom are resting their music on the sloping lid of the harpsichord. Victoria Helby

**Vivaldi *Concertos for oboe, strings and basso continuo*** Pauline Oostenrijk *ob*, Jan Willem de Vriend *vln*, Baroque Academy of The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra Challenge Classics CC72389 54' 38"

RV 127, 450, 454-5, 457, 461 & 463

This release comes as a hardback, CD-sized book with the disc itself inside the back cover. The note might be described as a feminist history of the oboe, ranging from Mesopotamia to Evelyn Barbirolli, via Vivaldi's *Pelegrina* and on to the current soloist. Pauline Oostenrijk plays a modern instrument and is supported by what may or may not be a period-instrument string orchestra. According to the notes, gut strings are fitted, but whatever bows are in the players' hands the style in which they used would not find favour with the orchestras generally reviewed in these pages. And the ensemble used is too big (43321). There is an unwelcome lushness to the slower and less active *tutti* passages and the first violins simply don't hit isolated high notes in unison. Many other aspects of the interpretations do suggest a HIP approach – *tempi* and some fierce articulation or dynamic contrasts such as have characterised certain Harnoncourt performances, for instance. The oboe playing is very good indeed, however, tonally even and distinctly deft, and I was pleasantly surprised that a disc of seven Vivaldi concerti was digestible in one sitting, so some credit must go to him. Actually, until the sequences start you might not guess that RV457 is in fact his. David Hansell

**Vivaldi & Bach for Recorders *Concerti per il flauto traversier*** Quartetto Icarus (Stefano Bagliano, Lorenzo Cavasanti, Priska Comploi & Manuel Staropoli *rec*) Dynamic CDS 667 55' 00"

RV 153, 157 & 443, BWV 593, 595, 596 & 1080

The members of this Italian quartet are all solo recorder players who got together to fill a gap in the southern European concert scene where recorder quartets previously did not appear. What I like about their playing is that, although their ensemble and intonation is pretty faultless, they can still be heard as individual players rather than producing the imitation organ sound which many recorder groups attempt to achieve. J. S. Bach transcribed some of Vivaldi's opus 3 violin concertos for keyboard and this programme includes arrangements of two of them as well as three contrapuncti from *The Art of Fugue*. It ends with a lively arrangement of Vivaldi's flautino concerto RV 443. Victoria Helby

**Venice in Mexico: Baroque Concertos by Giacomo Facco and Antonio Vivaldi** The Mexican Baroque Orchestra, Manuel Zogbi *violin* Daniel Armas *psaltery* Miguel Lawrence *sopranino rec* 60'34" divine art dda 25091

The Mexican Baroque Orchestra was founded by the conductor Miguel Lawrence in order to play the Venetian composer Giacomo Facco's concerti *Pensieri Adriarmonici* which were discovered in the library of Colegio de las Vizcainas in Mexico City in 1961. The orchestra plays on modern instruments with a distinctive sound produced by use of the mariachi vihuela and guitarrón as continuo instruments in accordance with 18th century Mexican performance practice. These are based on the instruments which were developed in Mexico during the 17th century from European plucked continuo instruments and over time have become louder so that they can now match the volume of modern orchestral strings. Like Vivaldi, Giacomo Facco was a composer and violinist and the similarity of style is immediately obvious. He worked mainly at the Spanish court and composed the first opera in Spanish *Las Amazonas de España*, but almost all his music was lost in a fire at the Royal Palace in Madrid. Miguel Lawrence gives a lively performance of two of Vivaldi's concerti for sopranino recorder, and the mandolin concerto in C major RV 425 is effective on

the psaltery. But readers of *EMR* may find the orchestral vibrato rather too strong for their taste. Victoria Helby

Weiss *The Heart Trembles with Pleasure*: Nigel North lute  
IGF BGS 119

The title of this CD comes from a pastoral poem by Johann Ulrich von König in which he describes the effect of Weiss' music on the listener: "Thus the heart trembles with pleasure as his strings are vibrating." For this excellent CD, Nigel North plays an 11-course lute by Lars Jönsson based on the Warwick Frei. From this one can deduce that the music is from the early part of Weiss' life, before he contributed to the advent of the 13-course lute. North begins with an Overture in B flat major, which has a short, soporific prelude-like introduction and a long, lively fugue. This is followed by a Partita in B flat, which includes a static Allemande, a restful Sarabande, a bustling Bourrée, and ends with two charming Menuets. According to North's concise yet informative sleeve note, there is no gigue; instead Weiss writes that, after the Menuets, the music should "rest in peace". The delightful Sonata in F major is dated 1717, and appears as the first suite in the so-called London MS. It was presumably written for Johann Christian Anthoni Adlersfeld, its first owner, who had lessons with Weiss when Weiss came to Prague. Also included are: the Fantasie in C minor which was written in Prague in 1719, shortly before Weiss moved to Dresden and started playing the 13-course lute; the Suite in C minor (Dusseldorf, 1706); and a Ciaccona in E flat major. North is kind to the lute. He makes a sweet, gentle sound without losing the inherent grandeur of music from this period. His playing is subtly expressive, and he succeeds in creating a variety of different moods or affects.

Stewart McCoy

*The Trio Sonata in 18th-Century England*  
London Baroque 70' 58"  
BIS BIS-CD-1765

Abel op 3/1, T. A. Arne op 3/2, Avison op 1/1, Boyce [op 1/5], Erskine sonata 6, Handel op 2/5, op 5/2, Ravenscroft op 1/8

These seven trio sonatas are presented on this disc in order of composition (or rather publication), rather than the alphabetic one listed above, which allows the listener a sense of historical perspective, starting with the Ravenscroft. In

spite of spending his life in Italy under the influence of Corelli, there are touches of Muffat in this fine sonata. The two Handel works are well crafted, and his use of material that one has heard in other guises makes interesting listening; op. 5/2 begins with music from two anthems, which are followed by two dances from *Ariodante*, a March and a Gavotte. The Avison, Arne and Boyce are all in the English Handel idiom. I expected to be a little disappointed with the Avison as a work, but was pleasantly surprised with op.1/1 – a fine, serious piece. The Boyce and Arne were equally interesting, each with their own individual styles, but the Abel and Erskine, two works in the pre-classical idiom, were less interesting, with their typical throbbing bass lines. They nevertheless demonstrated the 'decline and fall' of the genre, a style which nevertheless continued to be popular in England in the 1760s and 70s. The playing is superbly spirited and stylish, with plenty of ornamentation, although I wished that the harpsichord was a little more to the fore. The rather reverberative recording acoustic was a first a little off-putting, but my ear soon became acclimatised.

Ian Graham-Jones

#### CLASSICAL

W. F. Bach, *Kantaten 1* Dorothee Miels, Gerhild Romberger, Georg Poplutz, Klaus Mertens SATB, Bachchor Mainz, L'arpa festante, Ralf Otto 79' 01"  
Carus 83.362

*Ach dass du den Himmel zerrissest, Gott fährt auf mit Jauchzen, O Wunder wer kann dieses fassen, Wohl dem der den Herren fürchtet*

The opening movement is striking: it starts like an operatic popular chorus, suddenly turns into a bass recit, then ends with an SA arioso. Not all the music is formally so imaginative, but the four works here show considerable imagination, with the shifts from baroque to galant worrying less than I expected. There's a fine quartet of soloists, and the whole ensemble is excellent – don't expect any joyful harps in the orchestra, but the horns are exhilarating. The editions are from the hopefully imminent Collected Works, and I imagine that Carus will also issue the cantatas separately.

CB

See also the review of David Schulenberg's recent book on WFB on p. 3

Haydn *Il mondo nella luna* Dietrich Henschel *Buonafede*, Bernard Richter *Ecclitico*, Vivica Genaux *Ernesto*, Christine Landshamer *Clarice*, Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 167' (2 DVDs, plus 25' bonus)  
Unitel Classica major 703508

Haydn's operas have their fans, of whom Harnoncourt is one. This production was staged by the Theater an der Wien to mark his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and one can understand the enthusiastic reviews both the original production and this DVD have received. The music is first-class – spectacular arias, multi-layered ensembles, fine and extended finales, colourful orchestration exquisitely realised including the stage band on the moon – and the performers give their all, barring a slightly cautious approach to some of the ladies' coloratura. There are, of course, production issues. Clothes are modern, our fake astronomer and his friends stare at and adjust computers when the libretto speaks of telescopes and the TadW throw all their very considerable stage technology at the action, but for me Haydn and the frankly silly but also very funny plot survive the onslaught better than Purcell coped in the Glyndebourne *Fairy Queen*. Quite frankly, I didn't expect to enjoy this but the collective conviction of the cast ensured that I really did. Mozart wasn't the only one who could write a *dramma giocoso*.

David Hansell

Mozart *Mass in C minor* Gillian Keith, Tove Dahlberg, Thomas Cooley, Nathan Berg *SmSTB-Bar*, Handel and Haydn Society, Harry Christophers 54' 10"  
Coro COR 16084

I read with interest the quotation of 1915 by Saint-Saëns in one of Clifford's reviews in the October *EMR*: 'Another plague in the modern execution of music is the abuse of the *tremulo* (vibrato) by both singers and instrumental performers... Not all singers, fortunately, have this defect...'. Unfortunately, and most noticeable with the two sopranos Gillian Keith and Tove Dahlberg, was their almost continuous use of vibrato, except on the fast coloratura passages, in this otherwise excellent performance of the incomplete C Minor Mass, recorded live earlier this year from the Boston Symphony Hall. Although this performance may lack the clarity that could be obtained in the recording studio, its dynamism is evident, especially in the choruses.

Ian Graham-Jones

Teixidor *String Quartets* Cambini Quartet 61'04"  
la mà de guido LMG 2093  
Nos 1 in Bb, 2 in Eb, 5 in G

This quartet, having recorded works by Manuel Canales, continue the series with another obscure Spanish composer not to be found in *New Grove*. Joseph Teixidor (1752-1815) held organists' posts in Madrid and was also 'a teacher for children and vice teacher', according to the booklet in translation. The first quartet was published in 1801. They are all interesting works, perhaps more memorable for their textures and harmonic interest than for their thematic material. They are up to date, if not forward looking in style, and generally full of interest, somewhat more so than run-of-the-mill Boccherini quartets. The music stretches the technical requirements of the violin, in particular, as was evident, particularly in the last quartet on the disc. The playing is stylish, with little vibrato. An interesting collection – but I defy English listeners to follow the analysis of the works from the booklet translation! Ian Graham-Jones

#### 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Hoffmann *Liebe und Eifersucht* Gary Martin *Der Herzog von Florenz*, Robert Sellier *Enrico*, Florian Simson *Ottavio*, Jörg Simon *Fabio*, Christina Gerstberger *Lisida*, Thérèse Wincent *Cloris*, Sybille Specht *Nisa*, Sybilla Duffe *Celia*, Stefan Sevenich *Ponlevi*, Orchester der Ludwigsberger Schlossfestspiele, Michael Hofstetter 121'56"  
cpo 777 435-2 (2CDs in a box)

I thought this recording would be way outside my comfort zone, but once the music started playing as I drove through to Glasgow, I was swept along by Hoffmann's dramatic and melodious music. I didn't really have the faintest idea what the storyline was, and there are lengthy chunks of spoken dialogue, but this is in the *Magic Flute* tradition, with set numbers for all the major characters, and thoroughly enjoyable the whole is. In fact, it is one of the few CDs of a theatrical work that has made me want to try to see it! Being a period instrument (and LIVE) performance, there is no need for the singers to push their voices, and the result is a much more comfortable listening experience (at least for me). Hoffmann's arias are beautiful tuneful (not to say catchy – his ensemble pieces perhaps even more so), and his use of instrumental colours is very imaginative.

Essentially, though, it is a drama, and there is plenty in the music to drive the action forward – all very enjoyable. BC

The score in vols. 6-8 of Hoffmann's *Collected Works*. It's a *Singspiel*, words by the composer based on Schlegel's translation of Calderón. CB

Mendelssohn *Elias* Claudia Barainsky, Franziska Gottwald, Rainer Trost, Thomas E. Bauer SATB, Das Neue Orchester, Chorus Musics Köln, Christoph Spering 123'1"  
(2 CDs in a box)  
MDG Live MDG 602 1656-2

Whoever thought we'd ever have a choice of *Elijah* recordings on period instruments? This one makes a very strong impression with its barking brass, incisive timpani and limpid flute solos. There's one cruelly exposed moment that the violins might have wanted to re-take; but apart from that, the instrumental playing is first class. (This minor flaw highlights the issue of whether this is a live recording or not. The packaging says so, but it was recorded over two days and there is no background or audience noise.) The choir, singing in German, is thoroughly on top of their exciting material and selected members make a very good job of the large ensembles for which Mendelssohn requests soloists. I was particularly impressed by their dynamic shading. Thomas E. Bauer, as *Elijah*, is at his best in the more lyrical music, though does not lack *gravitas* elsewhere. His alto and tenor colleagues also make favourable impressions. More uneven is the contribution of soprano Claudia Barainsky. As is not unusual, it is vibrato that is the issue here. When she keeps it restrained everything is fine, but there are moments when it just billows in a way that does not match the rest of the sound world. The feisty note makes much of the interpretation's aim of following the composer's instructions precisely. These days this is not as rare as the writer thinks, but he and the conductor are right to suggest that this is a good idea and gives a view of the work significantly at variance with what is often heard. Overall, this is a thoroughly prepared performance, supported by a good booklet, which I can heartily recommend. David Hansell

Kalliwoda *Symphonies 2 & 4* Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens cpo 777 469-2 67'41"  
*Concerto Overture* op. 24

I'm not at all sure how or why, but

Kalliwoda's name has always been in the back of my mind. Should I have played some of his violin studies? Or did someone once play a piece in a concert that I thoroughly (and most unexpectedly, I imagine) enjoyed? Whatever the reason, I am very glad that I asked for a copy of this new period instruments release – the music is wonderful. Time has not been kind to Kalliwoda – his first symphony was hailed as a wonder by Schumann, but the second disappointed and the fourth was even more of a let-down, mostly in the sense of unfulfilled promise. Coming at it, as we inevitably do, from a different direction, our expectations are different; what I hear are three very accomplished pieces of orchestral writing, which I think would sit happily alongside Schumann, Brahms, even Dvorak, on a concert programme. Indeed, I'd rather listen to them than some of the modern works I've had to suffer in the past. I hope sincerely that Willens, the ever-impressive Kölner Akademie and cpo will continue to champion Kalliwoda's output. BC

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Bonbons *Les Violons du Roy*, Bernard Labadie 65'00"  
Atma classique ACD2 2600  
Bach *Sinfonia BWV156*, Air from BWV1068;  
Corelli/Geminiani *Concerto grosso La Follia*;  
Gluck *Ballet des Ombres heureuses*; A. Marcello  
*Oboe concerto*; Mozart: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*  
Pachelbel *Canon & gigue*; Purcell: *Chacony*

This is not without a sense of style, though it's not really *EMR* material, notwithstanding the presence of theorbo and baroque guitar with the modern strings. It's more a case of multiple instruments where we might prefer soloists and the *rallentando* and complete stops that end the sections of Bach's famous *Air*, regardless of whether or not there's a go-back, a go-on or the end. Mozart fares better, K525 receiving a distinctly sprightly performance.

David Hansell

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Welcome to our new reviewer, Richard Jones, a Bach specialist, most widely known for his editions for the Associated Board. One of my most-used Bach books is his revised and translated edition of Alfred Dürr's *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*. As well as valuable accounts of each cantata, it includes the German and English texts in parallel and an excellent introduction with a discussion of performance practice that all should read. CB

## BRIAN JORDAN

4 September 1934 – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010

Many of our readers will know Brian, either from his Cambridge shop or from meeting him at the conferences and courses he so assiduously visited as well as from the Early Music Exhibition. But he was a very shy and retiring person: how few of us really knew him?

He was brought up by a family whose only musical activity was his mother singing songs from the shows. He learnt the piano and wanted to go to music college. His parents consulted a pianist friend; he did not recommend that they should encourage a musical career. Instead, he signed up for three years in the army, joining the Durham Light Infantry, where he became a bandsman, playing the piano in concerts and social events and the bass drum for more military activities. His claim to fame was that he was the lead drummer at the 1953 Royal Wedding, setting the pace for the procession. He enjoyed his postings in Egypt and Germany.

After the army, Brian found a job in the music trade. There was a music shop at the top of Charing Cross Road, on the right just before Centrepont, which I used to visit often in the early 1960s. Various firms, including Augener and Stainer & Bell, were linked under the name of Galaxy, and it had a squashed but curious stock, much smaller but more intriguing than the music department of nearby Foyles. It was there that Brian found his wife. Later, I was told by William Elkin how surprised he and his staff were when Brian announced his engagement to Anne: they married in 1966. Sadly, I remember neither of them at the shop. Elkin offered Brian a job when Galaxy disintegrated, but Brian preferred an offer from Woolfie (Harold Woolfenden) at the Cambridge Music Shop in 1967. When there was a reorganisation, Brian used his redundancy pay to set up his own shop in Holland Park.

That was when I first encountered him. Anthony Rooley had established The Early Music Centre in Prince-

dale Road, and Brian opened his early music shop next-door. This was at a time when much of the music that people using the Centre needed was available with difficulty through the music shops. Brian quickly became aware of the needs of the specialist community at the Centre, and the shop opened the eyes of those not attached to music departments with extensive libraries to the wealth of music that was available. The opportunity to browse was invaluable. There lutenists (who more than the rest of us needed facsimiles) could find virtually anything that was available. And I doubt if any other shops stocked the magnificent (and affordable) Scolar Press facsimiles of the entire Jacobethan lute-song publications. When Scolar abandoned them, Brian took them over and kept them in print.

But he longed to be back in Cambridge, and Brian Jordan Music and Books opened in Green Street in 1981. Soon after, he bought a characterful house in Huntingdon looking across a stream over Portholme, said to be the largest meadow in England. It is still the family home.

Brian acquired an incredibly wide and deep knowledge of 'classical' (in its sense of 'non-popular') music. The Cambridge shop was not specifically an early-music one, though it was biased a little in that direction. One reason for that was the stock he retained to enable him to go to events round the country, and these tended to be 'early'



ones. He always had an estate car, which could carry a substantial quantity of music and books. They were neatly packed in cardboard boxes in which the music could rapidly be displayed on arrival at a course, a summer school or similar event. It was hard work: the boxes were heavy, as I found out when I stood in for him at a couple of the Medieval and Renaissance Conferences in the mid-1980s. I'm not sure what Brian did when the conferees were conferring or the players playing: I joined in, but Brian didn't. I felt he must be a bit lonely.

It is a mystery to me how Brian picked up his knowledge. His first music-shop job would have given him a grasp of the conventional 'classical' repertoire, but the unique feature of his activities was his wide knowledge of early music. He didn't acquire it from playing, and I don't know whether he actually enjoyed listening to it. There was a small grand piano in his house, but I never heard him play it. Anne told me a couple of times that Schumann was his favourite. We saw quite a lot of each other: we sold our music to him, and we bought from him music to send to our customers. Our house wasn't much of a detour on his daily journey to Cambridge, and collections or deliveries were generally made early in the morning on his way to work. Only rarely did he stop for a chat: a pity, because when we did, we had plenty to talk about – though it tended to be chiefly about recent editions. He was always helpful when needed. For instance, he happened to call on us to pick up some music early on the morning our dog Scruff died. We needed to get him out of the house before the children woke up. I had to take my harpsichord somewhere, so we asked Brian if he would dispose of the dog, which he did willingly. Affection by his customers is apparent if you google *Brian Jordan Song*.

All seats were full at the funeral at Little St Mary's. Music included a well-sung Victoria Requiem and Bach excellently played by the organist.

#### IN MEMORIAM BRIAN JORDAN

A concert to remember Brian Jordan will be held on Friday 4 March at 7.30 pm in Cambridge in Trinity College Chapel by kind permission of the Master and Fellows – appropriately since the College was the landlord of Brian's shop. Entry is free with a retiring collection to be divided between The British Heart Foundation and The Musicians Benevolent Fund.

The programme provisionally includes Cambridge Voices (Tallis and/or Josquin), The Fairhaven Singers (Dering and Chilcott) and The New Cambridge Singers (Bach *Komm, Jesu, Komm*), Anne Page playing Bach on the organ, Lynette Alcantara singing Schumann and R Strauss songs, David Irving and Francis Knights with sonatas by Uccellini and Fontana, Robert Foster playing solo lute music, a small instrumental group directed by Sean Heath from Corpus Christi, and I hope a small group of singers from the Clare choir with Campian, to include *Never Weather Beaten Sail* – and if time allows, the organiser (Douglas Hollick) playing CPE Bach on the harpsichord.

Further information from [dwh@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:dwh@globalnet.co.uk)

#### JAMES TYLER

3 August 1940–23 Nov. 2010

Jim Tyler was born in Hartford CT, and encountered plucked strings in his mid-teens – mandolin and banjo. He approached the lute as a c.1900 gut-string banjo player, which he maintained was a better background for playing the lute than the classical guitar. He joined New York Pro Musica in 1963 and five years later moved to Munich and became a member of the Studio der frühen Musik. By 1970, he was based in London, where he played with Tony Rooley and David Munrow. I particularly remember his duet concerts with Tony, who was the straight guy to Jim's virtuosic embellishments. Sometimes his fingers ran away a little too enthusiastically, and one didn't have to hear the music to see when he was in trouble – his smile got more and more intense. For a while, after the death of David Munrow, he had his own ensemble, the London Early Music Group.

He concentrated particularly on the early guitar and mandolin. The public side of this was his two recordings of the Vivaldi mandolin concertos – with Trevor Pinnock and Neville Marriner. More importantly, he wrote two books on the early guitar and one on the mandolin, with a guide to playing the guitar due for imminent publication. He was professor of music at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles; he retired in 2006. I hardly saw him after he moved back to the States, but we occasionally swapped emails and he was a subscriber to EMR. He was one of those few scholars who were also skilled professional players, and someone who did not try to conceal his innate enthusiasm. CB

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